

Art. Panel

disques

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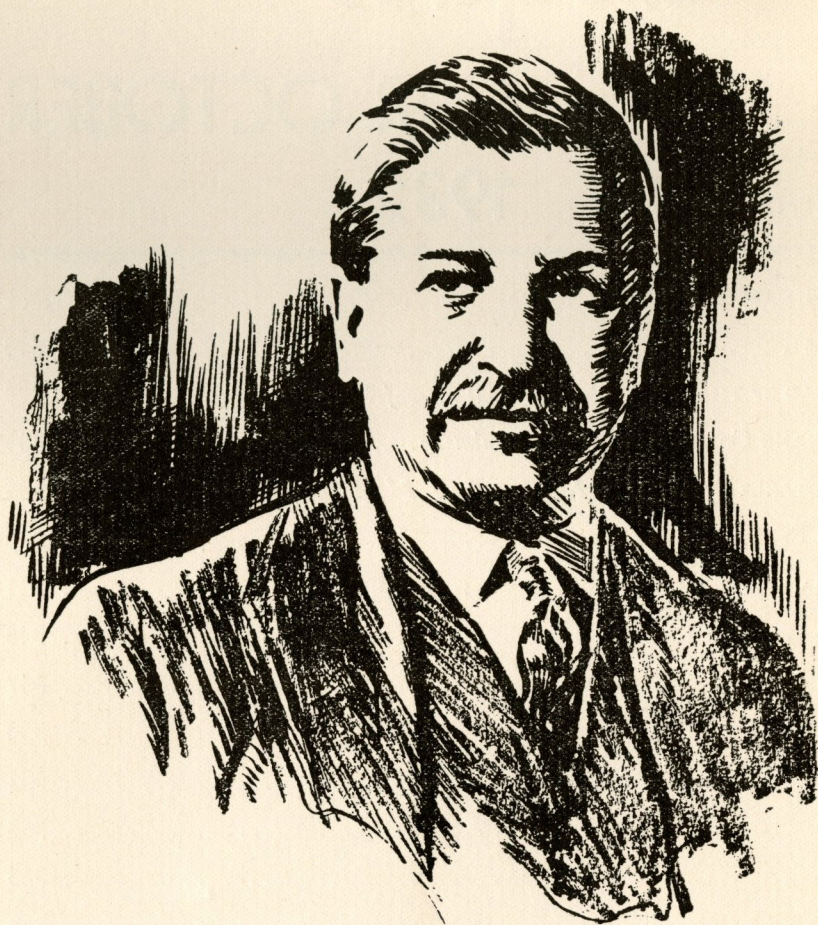
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THE phonograph, though now used by a relatively small group of people in this country, was once one of the great American industries. Today, only some ten years later, it is a comparatively minor and obscure business, the existence of which is scarcely realized by the great mass of the American people. Its present function—almost entirely that of a musical instrument—has little in common with the uses to which it was put fifteen and twenty years ago. Its chief support today comes from musicians and music lovers, whereas it once drew generously—inconceivably generously—upon that vast public that now finds its principal source of home entertainment in the radio. Musicians and music lovers constitute a relatively small proportion of the American public, and in consequence the phonograph, appealing mainly to them, has quite naturally lost its once dominating position in American business. Seeing a phonograph machine or record today, the average American is at first puzzled and then, with some difficulty recognizing it, sneers derisively, as the owner of a 1932 model automobile enjoys doing when he is confronted by a 1912 model.

Since the advent of the radio, this average American helpfully explains, there is no further use for the now outmoded phonograph. In a way he is correct, and his explanation, simple and thrice familiar though it may

be, accounts in a large measure for the decline of the phonograph as a big business. Yet prior to the entrance of the radio the phonograph occupied a salient position in American life, and records and victrolas were very much in the public mind.

The story of the phonograph in America is a thoroughly interesting one, yet it has never been adequately told. There is (at least as far as we know) no book on the subject, though in other countries various tomes have appeared dealing with the history of the machine. But in this country the complete history has never been published, and the future historian—providing one should ever deem it worth his while to tackle the subject—will have to gather his materials from widespread sources, involving much arduous research. Most collectors, of course, are vaguely familiar with the salient points in the history of the phonograph, but the early days of the machine are more or less shrouded in mystery, and the details are buried in the decaying files of innumerable newspapers.

The task of this future historian of the industry will be greatly ameliorated by Mr. Dane Yorke's comprehensive article in the September *American Mercury*, in which, at some length, he tells the story of the "Rise and Fall of the Phonograph." Armed with an imposing array of facts and

figures, he carefully traces the history of the machine from its humble beginning back in 1877, when Edison announced his invention, through the industry's palmy days, when the "three great companies, Edison, Columbia, and Victor, held rigid control, and shared between them a sales income that rose to more than \$125,000,000 a year" (representing "a retail expenditure by the American public of \$250,000,000 annually for phonograph merchandise bearing those three names"), to its inevitable decline, a few years ago, "as a self-contained, independent industry."



It is a melancholy story, characteristically American, and Mr. Yorke tells it calmly, accurately and dispassionately. He concentrates on the business aspects of the phonograph industry, and avoids any mention of its contribution to music. His article, in consequence, is one-sided and tends to give the quite erroneous impression that the phonograph is either fast disappearing or has already disappeared completely, whereas any collector knows this is decidedly not the case. Indeed, the industry, in spite of its loss of power, wealth and influence, is right now in its most important stage, and though it is most certainly not a big business—using the word *big* in the sense that impresses Americans—it is, to many music lovers, a vitally important business.

Thus the reader of Mr. Yorke's article should bear in mind that he is treating the subject solely from a business standpoint, and considering it as such the article is excellent. It will probably be more interesting—though perhaps in a rather painful way—to manufacturers and dealers than to record collectors, but the latter, who have suffered least of all from this tragic decline, will find the account a fascinating, if rather a sad, one. In these lean days, when one finds it difficult to buy a phonograph machine that is not also a radio and perhaps several other things combined, it is somewhat astonishing to learn that so recently as 1924 Victor's advertising budget was estimated at \$5,000,000, which was said to have been the largest of any American corporation that year.

Mr. Yorke's description of the first days of the phonograph industry is especially valuable, and since most of us are rather hazy on the matter, perhaps a few quotations* will be of interest. He shows how Edison, having stumbled upon the phonograph in connection with other experiments, was not at first greatly interested in the device and did not "begin to develop it commercially until about 1885, when he found his rivals, the famous Volta Laboratories, filing patents intended to make it a success commercially."



The Volta Laboratories called their product the graphophone, "and in 1887 the American Graphophone Company (which, practically speaking, soon became the Columbia Graphophone Company) was formed to market the machines and the wax cylinder records made under Bell and Tainter patents." There was considerable friction between the Edison and Bell groups, and a good deal of litigation followed, but by 1890 they came to some sort of an agreement, and the Edison

* These quotations are made with the permission of *The American Mercury*.

phonographs and Bell graphophones were placed on the market. "But the dividends did not begin at once. The possibilities of the instrument as a home entertainer were not immediately recognized. Its chief rôle in the early '90s was that of a slot-machine amusement in barrooms, railroad stations, bawdy houses, nickelodeons and penny arcades. The patrons of that innocent era carefully adjusted to their ears a pair of rubber tubes, dropped a coin into a slot, and then listened spell-bound as the machine ground out a squeaky song, a comic recitation, or a blaring band piece. It had the fascinations of a toy and a scientific marvel combined. But a musical instrument it was surely not. The chief sales outlet were hardware stores, toy stores, bicycle shops, and sewing machine agencies. To ask a piano merchant to take on the line was to invite his resentment of what he regarded as a deliberate insult."

When Emile Berliner, a naturalized American citizen of German birth who had figured in the perfecting of the telephone, became interested in the phonograph, he invented a "machine he called the gramophone which differed sharply from the Edison and Bell machines, whose records were round wax cylinders, by using flat discs. Berliner exhibited his invention before the Franklin Institute of Philadelphia so early as 1888 and had it marketed abroad by 1890. But for some reason he did not obtain a United States patent until about 1895, so that the real advent of the disc record in this country did not come until almost twenty years after the invention of the phonograph. But 1896 saw the start of Berliner's gramophone marketing, and the beginning of a struggle for supremacy between the cylinder and disc machines. It was a struggle that was necessarily to the death, because neither type of machine could use the records of the other. It went on for almost twenty years before the complete triumph of the disc was finally acknowledged."



A New York organization called the National Gramophone Company handled Berliner's sales rights, "and some unknown genius in that company struck out boldly at once with full-page magazine advertisements aimed directly at the American home. The very first of them featured the gramophone as a 'talking machine that talks talk' with sufficient volume and clarity 'to be plainly heard in a large parlor,' and announced that it was intended 'solely for the entertainment of the home circle' . . . Altogether, those early gramophone ads, from 1896 to 1900, laid down practically every sales appeal that was to characterize phonograph merchandising for the ensuing quarter of a century. The policy of featuring entertainment for the home, rather than mechanical novelty; the policy of star endorsement; even the policy of installment selling—these were all first developed by the National Gramophone Company.

"Its competition was felt, and Columbia, falling back upon Bell patents that had never been developed commercially, brought legal pressure upon the National Gramophone Company. Either by bluff or persuasion (the record is vague) the latter was induced to accept a judgment acknowledging patent infringement, in which Berliner, the actual inventor, was not a party. The name gramophone was abandoned—without Berliner's consent—and the National Gramophone Company practically combined with Columbia in the merchandising of a new disc machine

called the zonophone. This was in 1900. Out of the wreckage of Berliner's affairs thus brought about there emerged in the following year the Victor Talking Machine Company. Today the word gramophone is practically unknown in this country, but in England and Continental Europe it is still the generic name for all talking machines.

"The phonograph had begun as a scientific novelty; Edison and Columbia advanced it to the status of a public amusement device; the gramophone brought it to the third stage of home entertainment. But none of these gave it the dignity of a musical instrument: that was the contribution (in this country, at least) of Victor. Since the rise of the machine was largely consequent upon its rise as a musical instrument, its story after 1901 is almost wholly the story of the Victor Company, of which Eldridge R. Johnson was the founder and principal figure."

In 1901 the Victor Talking Machine Company was finally organized, "to begin a career of trade dominance almost unique in American business history. Johnson had managed to keep a substantial controlling interest (which he never lost) and the bulk of the incorporators were his employes from the little machine shop. Loyalty was strong among them; they still worked for Eldridge Johnson. His company was that *rara avis*, a corporation with working directors whose sole business interest was the development of their own product."



Such, in bare outline, were the beginnings of the phonograph industry in America. Its rapid progress and the rivalries of the three companies make absorbing reading, and the incredible popularity the machine achieved seems almost miraculous today.

The first of the blunders that helped send the industry plunging downward, according to Mr. Yorke, was Victor's stubborn refusal to bring out a flat top model in the early '20s. The flat top idea developed out of a craze for "a mirror on the apartment wall, beneath it (or in front) a flat top console, and on the console a bowl of fruit (perhaps even cherries!) or a vase of artificial flowers. And somehow, some way, there came a demand for a phonograph in that console. To Upper Broadway, the Bronx and Brooklyn, the æsthetic appeal of that combination of mirror, console, music and a bowl of fruit was irresistible."

But Victor refused to bring out the flat top model that was so badly wanted, and as a result suffered tremendous losses in both money and prestige, as well as enabling competitors to obtain a firm foothold. When it could avoid the matter no longer, Victor gave in to the public demand, and by "1924 the directors were somewhat dazedly putting out purely flat top console Victrolas, and period cabinets that looked like anything and everything but a phonograph. They were at last ready to give the public what it wanted, for sales had declined to \$37,000,000 and net operating income had fallen off more than 80% in two years. This in spite of the fact that in the same year of 1924 Victor stood out as the largest advertiser of any American corporation, its advertising budget being estimated that year at \$5,000,000—or almost 14% of its sales, an astonishingly high percentage. But the plain truth was that the public, now busily listening to radio (which in two years had leaped from a sales volume of \$60,000,000 to \$350,000,000), had forgotten even its flat top wants, and was deaf to the frantic barking of the Victor trademark dog."

The rest of the story is well known and need not be repeated here. What particularly impresses one in Mr. Yorke's engrossing narrative is that the record industry he is talking about has very little in common with what remains of the record industry today—no more, indeed, than a modern recording has with an acoustical recording made during the heyday of the industry. The record industry no longer ranks in the class of big business, and it is surely difficult to see how it could ever achieve that status again. Nor, indeed, is it altogether desirable that it should. Its vast popularity that was responsible for the breath-taking sales in those early days was not based on a permanent foundation; there was nothing lasting about it. The type of records that the public bought then differed quite sharply from the type the much smaller record-buying public buys today.

The radio nowadays gives the enormous public that supported the industry during its period of prosperity everything it could get then, and in a far more efficient and cheaper manner. No one wants to pay money for records when he can get precisely the same thing over the radio for nothing, especially not when it is the sort of entertainment that is most popular on the radio today and was most popular on records during the industry's most thriving days.

It therefore seems rather absurd to attribute the industry's downfall to anything other than unavoidable circumstances. This decline might have been put off a few years longer, the fall might not have had such a depressing thud about it, but it was sure to occur sooner or later no matter how capable and resourceful the directors of the various companies were.

The strange thing about the whole matter is that the better phonographs and records become, the closer to perfection they are brought, the less popular do they become. So long as radio reception and phonograph reproduction remain approximately equivalent, so long will the present situation prevail, and for obvious reasons. As a means for reproducing fine music the phonograph is unparalleled, and with careful management it can always count on a comfortable livelihood. But not much more than that. There are not enough people interested in fine music, whether reproduced or directly sounded, to support the phonograph in the lavish way it was supported some years ago. The only thing that might restore the phonograph to a measure of its former popularity would be some startling new development which would enable the phonograph to give much better reproduction than the radio does reception. The development of a fine long-playing record, giving reproduction far superior to anything we have today, would probably interest a large section of the public now unreached. The development of such a record is not an impossibility. But the radio, too, is bound to improve, and so long as we have it with us the phonograph can never perform its former function: that of dispensing all sorts of fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-rate entertainment to enormous swarms of dull people forlornly trying to escape boredom. That has largely been the radio's function in the past, it is its function today, and, barring miracles, it will be its function for a good many years to come.



In all this we see no reason for the collector to object. He has never been better served than he is now. As for us, we would rather have the phonograph industry a small, dignified one than a large, vulgar one, sending forth all sorts of trash

into the world. Do the huge, mass-producing publishing firms issue the finest books? Or do the somewhat more modest and dignified publishers? Is the best movie always at Roxy's? Or isn't it most often at a less imposing theatre down the street?

The collector objects, and not without reason, to the admittedly excessively high prices asked for records, but he should not overlook the fact that he is never asked today to pay \$7 for a single-sided acoustically recorded disc giving a hackneyed sextette from an inferior opera sung by a group of highly-touted stars. But when the phonograph industry was a big business such prices were not extraordinary, and moreover people paid them cheerfully, assuming in the normal American manner that since the price was \$7 there must be something quite unusual etched in the grooves. Manufacturers and dealers, it seems to us, are the only ones entitled to complain. They have a legitimate cause for sorrow in this decline of the record industry, for they make their livings at the business. Their lamentations are understandable. But any collector who feels like shedding a tear is advised to glance over the 1920 catalogues and compare them with the current ones. Moreover, if he will play one of the records listed in the 1920 catalogues and one of those listed in the current supplements, he may find ample reason for abandoning his melancholy. In view of these unquestionable gains, one can forgive—or at least eye tolerantly—several carloads of blunders.



Perhaps the most important phonograph record society yet announced is the "Forty-Eight" Society, to be founded under the presidency of Sir Henry Hadow by the English Columbia Company and the Dolmetsch Foundation. According to Compton Mackenzie's editorial in the current issue of *The Gramophone*, "It is proposed to issue this great body of music [the Forty-eight Preludes and Fugues of Bach] in a series of 12-in. discs appearing annually in albums of seven at a time at two guineas each." The records will be played on the clavichord by Arnold Dolmetsch.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS, INDEX AND BOUND VOLUMES

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CODE

The first letters in the record number indicate the manufacturer and all records are domestic releases unless the word **IMPORTED** appears directly under the number: B-Brunswick, C-Columbia, CH-Christschall, D-Decca, EB-Edison-Bell, FO-Fonotipia, G-National Gramophonic Society, HO-Homocord, O-Odeon, PA-Parlophon, PD-Polydor, R-Regal (English), and V-Victor.

The World of the Phonograph

By PAUL ROSENFELD

I saw the world of the phonograph last summer, at my friends's on the hill over the lake. It was a particolored, part fantastic space with regions of cloud and light on high, and a massive and impenetrable base below. Between the roof that was all air, all immateriality, and the substratum that was all rock, all material night, lay a belt of mixed and clashing elements, storms, mountains, rainbows, sky-reaching trees. Here, human forms passed, wandering, searching. Momentarily, there were harmonies of the whole, heaven, bedrock and the blue air and green mountains between: an afternoon Olympus.

At my friends's, the Orthophonic stands between a screen-door and a window which afford everchanging prospects of the low-lying lake, the back of mountain wall and its undulant southward streaming crest and the skyey vault. Almost regularly, while the machine was active, bits of the landscape significantly met my eye through the vineleaves festooning the old porch outside.

The experience actually began the evening we arrived in the old farmhouse, tired from the trip and feeling our own defeat in the defeat of the age. Someone placed the record of one of the Gregorian chants sung by the choir of monks of the Abbey of Solesmes on the machine; and as the monkish voices projected the slender volumes of the pure, unfamiliar, and gradual monody through time, I suddenly saw from the window, as if for a first time, faint opalescent light travelling in streaks across the grey evening clouds. Pale silvers and golds I had never previously appreciated were swiftly disclosed to me; and the grey cloud-masses over the darkening earth seemed warm with the pale treasures afloat in them. They were remote, inaccessible, on high, these treasures. One felt as pain the fact that human hands could never reach them. Still, their presence was a treat. Dimly a capacity to find a satisfaction in objects so inaccessible announced its existence within. Simultaneously, the feeling that these streaks of faintly tinted light in some way were significant of the content of the chant grew very pronounced.

A few nights after, another record caused a very similar experience. The second act of *Tristan und Isolde* made me as conscious of the earth the house stood on as the Gregorian chant had made me aware of the lights in the grey sky. The smoking, high-pressure music, with its wild fanfares, suspenses, brusque surges and eddies of sound, had scarce begun before I forgot it and the action of the drama, in the perception of a dark, deep region, matrix of somber flames. I would have called it the night, had not some density and viscousness in the sinuous tones of reeds and brass, some indication of the source of instinct in the precipitous rhythms, persuaded me that what I was seeing was the material night of earth herself. The many little flames starting from it twisted into two tall brands, the one with a masculine, the other with a feminine color. But it was the flame itself that sang; and under it, sensible in all its invisibility, lay, rich and fecund, the great deep that sent them towering. There was a passage when another voice than the two lovers's sang; then, the glamorous abyss beneath the very level of the flames themselves rose into view.

In the opera, we know that passage as the fabulously scintillant aubade of

Brangaene, with its strings in sixteen parts. But on the Orthophonic, it was a revelation of the womb of earth herself, lying close and rumorously and bestarred. There was a stirring in its soft mysterious depths, a sighing, a whispering as of myriads of unborn lives. Luminous atoms traversed the pregnant gloom, like the ringing notes of vibrant harpstrings. Dusky waves mounted slowly, subsided, making way for others with higher crests till the night itself seemed bearing upward some birth. Slowly, the sparkling fathomless abyss faded from view. And then the music had the voice of exile from the source of life, and yearning back toward its enveloping tides.

Again, a few nights after, I grew similarly conscious of a part of the world outside the window lying deeper even than the dark earthy one seen through *Tristan*. It happened while the disc of the entre-act from *Khovanschina*, by Moussorgsky, was revolving. As the funereal bells, the depressed horn notes and brooding drum beats sounded, and the melancholy song, broad as the base of mountains, slowly progressed, I seemed to feel life far under the earth itself; but a different life from that revealed by Wagner. This bore the whole globe's weight; the colossal tonnage of the mountains, and with it the world's tragedy, the continuous funeral processions, endless as the mountains' lines: the going from darkness into grey and into darkness again, the overwhelming sum of human pain and human defeat. I took this region to be the grave, or as close it as consciousness can reach. The region of *Tristan* was near it, perhaps, and resembled it in earthiness and darkness. But that, still, was charged with flame, with electric sparks. Possibilities existed in it. Creation was in progress there. But in the strata of Moussorgsky there was no light, no possibility, no gestation. It was all bowed, prisoned force; a death in life; a grave.

And other records made me similarly conscious of other portions of the landscape beyond the vine-hung porch, made me perceive them with a like intensity and appreciativeness, similarly as if for a first time. What was even more curious was the fact that the individual records, and the individual portions of the scene impressed on me while they revolved, proved almost rigidly paired. No matter how frequent the performances, the particular compositions faithfully recalled their very particular partners in the visible sphere. Even when I did not happen to look forth, or when a dark night and the electric lamps blinded the doors and windows, these special regions quite involuntarily swam to mind at the sound of their associates, and stayed there with a significant obstinacy: pictures filled with meaning, declarative of something in the pieces in process of performance.

II

No two of the pictures were identical. Certain of them overlapped, including identical fragments of the great scene from which they came. Still, each was distinct and contrasted with its neighbour. And gradually the lot of them began forming an independent whole, visible to the mind whether there was music or not; visible to the sensual eye as it raked the landscape, and to the mental eye when the sensual was shut; in either case declarative of the soul of the machine's entire repertoire. It hung in the air, like a chart or sphere, and to become conscious of any of its regions, high or low, was both to find a new interest in the landscape and to know something about some composer and his work. To see the region of clouds

and skies was to feel both it and the spirit of the Gregorian chants; to see the sloping earth itself was to know the ground and the meaning of the second act of *Tristan*, or Moussorgsky. And, to see the mountain wall rearing stark and grey through the sweeping rain and dithering lightening of a summer storm was to get the sense of its beauty and of Bach in certain of his organ works. Beethoven was the man who strode through the liquid trees, amid fresh winds, dampness, and mingled sun and rain; searching under the rainbow's prismatic arch. The smouldering clouds of a regal dark sunset held the feeling of Brahms in his Piano Quintet. As for Mozart, he was a certain exquisite condition of light, temperature and air enchanting the earth, till one knows not which is the more heavenly, the shimmering green cool below, or the warm and smiling blue above. They lie so interfused.

III

An idle creation, this world of the phonograph? The dream of a vagrant mind? Possibly; there is no doubt that the landscape beyond the porch constitutes a distraction; a very potent one for the reason that the mechanical nature of the execution removes the concert-room's instrument of concentration, the physical presence of the performer. Besides, the phonograph itself, at least our phonograph, to a degree discourages attention to the tones themselves. They are far less accurate and rich than the vibrations of instruments directly sounded. The drone-bass ground out of the plates by the needle is always distinct. For all the wonderful improvements in the science of recording, the Victrola's tones whiffle and snort and cough: particularly during symphonic performances. Though conscious of many beauties and intricacies and monumentalities of line and structure, one can't readily distinguish various strands and timbres in the foggy roar.

Still, I do not believe my symbolic cosmos an empty fancy, and see in it very simply a system of values involuntarily conceived in the form of a landscape-picture; a body of relations expressing the relationships existing between the compositions forming the repertoire of the phonograph between the screen-door and the window, the contrasts and differences of the souls of them; their relative spirituality and materiality, ethereality or sensuousness, supernaturalism or naturalism, constructiveness or suicidalism, the direction of their flight, to the skies or to the earth, the different cosmic forces with which they put us in accord. Perhaps it is even a proof of the identity of our mind-stuff and inanimate nature. In any case, there is a good reason for its association of certain cosmic regions and certain pieces. If for example the sky recalled the Gregorian chants, it was because of the sublimated feeling of the music: all these subtly rhythmical songs are addressed above. If they make use of a sensuous language, they do so not to communicate with the world of the senses: they are minimally expressive of passion, of power, of earthly hope. They tend toward consciousness and desire of something not of this world, something as far beyond men's reaches as the clouds, having as little affair with the human will and the desires of the flesh as the overarching blue itself. It is the medieval godhead, throning in the invisible outside creation, mildly shining into a world that would be dark without his spiritual radiance; and there is but a single will in this music, the renunciation of the "lower" faculties and all that binds man to this darksome planet and separates him from his god, and the growth of the selfless love for One remote from creation, and only accessible to the

disembodied spirit. And what it draws toward man is some object as immaterial, intangible, and apart from the earthly impulses as the silver, violet and golden streaks in the grey clouds of evening.

IV

If for its part the solid earth recalled the second act of *Tristan*, it is for the good reason that the music sets us in harmony with an entirely materialistic conception of the universe, and the blind powers of the body. Nothing is supernatural here: there is no beyond, no spiritual man, and merely material forces, biologic urgencies, doing their indomitable will in utter disregard of the individual, proliferating untold millions of lives in biologic night; but grandly, imperiously, with a sort of godlike dignity. The dignity of a female divinity! For here the all is parturient.

Or, if the bedrock and the mountain bases evoked Moussorgsky's plangent melody, it is a consequence of the combination of power and inertia in the music, its feeling of force inwardly chained; perhaps the passivity, agelong suffering and resignation of the slavic peoples; the graveward direction of its energies (1875).

And if the play of elemental forces stood for Bach's D Minor Organ Toccata and Fugue, it was because his age's mechanistic conception of the cosmic forces found its musical equivalent in his works; and the angular lightening and slanting rain were symbolical of a music of volcanic upheaval, giant gestures of abstract force, and the roar of landslides and world-annihilation, titanic and empty. And if the surface of the earth was Beethoven, it was for the reason that the music of Beethoven at hand at my friends's, the string quartets, is the music par excellence of the human being, the expression of the human heart. Just what in the mighty lines and prodigious developments and surprises of this music keeps us conscious of the human breast and the human lot, is not easily said. Perhaps it is the feeling of struggle and conflict, never long absent from it; that, and the pervasive warmth and tenderness? Certainly the human ego is never quite inaudible in Beethoven, with its hungers and yearnings; for all the joy and humility of the man. Beethoven is rarely lost in Heaven, as some of the other composers were: a certain pride and truculence of the revolutionary epoch cling always to him; and Havelock Ellis has wisely called him the Titan rather than the God. Surely no music has ever expressed a greater sympathy for the human being, a greater yearning for his complete expression. Here, if ever in the art of music, all is directed toward Man. Even in the final quartets, where the great revolutionary ego has almost become a part of things themselves, the purity the composer sings, the innocence and loveliness, is still a matter of the human breast.

V

If the regal color of the low sunset, soft after the sting and turbulence and heat of the day, was the sign of Brahms, it was because so much of his music is passion's afterglow; fiery and watery color encompassed by the approach of twilight and age. A piece like the F Minor Piano Quintet seems essentially retrospective, for all its heroism. As in some Pelasgic legend, or in the sunset skies, giants pile Pelion upon Ossa. As in some canto of the Eddas, there is a clash of swords and shields and battleaxes; and the beauty and fervor of lovers flare against the dark; and fate is musical as the 'cello's tone. But this clash and passion and this hand of fate are

things known less to action than to meditation. The forms of courage and wild life are already remote and legendary, passing in all their splendor into a quiet dream; and one's participation is more spectatorial than actual. There is always this touch of the equivocal in Brahms; this never quite active sympathy with life. Perhaps for that reason, he is always more persuasive when he questions than when he affirms, or tries to do so, as he tries in the finale of the C Minor Symphony.

As for the Olympian afternoon hours, they were Mozart by reason of his feeling of perfection; his music's manifold expressions of it. For if there is desire in Mozart, it is joyous. If there is longing, it is only that of the gods themselves among their stars and on their deathless roses, with fulfillment hovering close. Here on earth he seems to have moved upon Olympus, an harmony of spirit and body, seeing the grace of the children of Zeus, the arms that lift in beauty, the garments that flow ethereally light, the bodies that pulse with divine levity and have a deathless bloom; and to have passed their breath into his music.

Thus I learned to value the phonograph. To a degree, this little system of values I call the world of the phonograph was the product of the position of the machine at my friends's. The moods the music won one to sympathy with were given the opportunity of immediate objective reference by it: for there was the landscape to act as focus; the world of nature to reveal their connections. But the ultimate cause of the picture was the particular power of the instrument itself: subtly appreciated and exploited by my friends. The phonograph has the almost unique power of contrasting all kinds of music, of letting one juxtapose ecclesiastical, concert, chamber, vocal, operatic works, of every style and period. Because of this opportunity for contrast, it brings their individualities to light in a telling way; thus yielding both the secret of what each piece is actually about; and what the whole art of music has sought to express and has succeeded in expressing. And that is, the universe of man: perhaps *the* universe.

[Continued from page 328]

The first issue of *The Music Lovers' Guide*, published by the New York Band Instrument Company and edited by Axel B. Johnson with the assistance of R. D. Darrell, has just appeared, and if future issues maintain the high standard set in the September number it promises to be an extremely useful and interesting magazine. "Its primary purpose," according to the editorial, "is to serve as the intermediary between those interested in recorded music as amateurs and those as professionals. It will give a voice to the wishes and suggestions of the former and pass on the best of these to the latter." The first issue contains excellent articles on "The Fantastic Berlioz and a Symphony" (James Hadley), "The Manufacturer's Point of View" (George C. Jell), "The Selective Symphonist" (R. D. Darrell), "Managing a Musician" (Stephen Kemp), "A Century of Progress" (Arthur J. Neumann). Last but surely not least are the well written and informative record reviews covering the best of imported and domestic issues.



With the comment "an admirable piece of modern American typographic design," the quarterly magazine, *Direct Advertising*, reproduces in its summer issue the

[Continued on page 335]

Ravel's Piano Concerto*

By NICOLAS SLONIMSKY



Ravel's Concerto opens with the crack of a whip—*le fouet*,—which is in reality not a whip at all, but a noisemaker constructed of two strips of wood flexibly joined at one end. This snap of the whip sets the pace for the entire Concerto, or at least its first movement—rapid, uninhibited, easy-flowing. Ravel's uncanny art in instrumental registering triumphs once more; the general compass of this Concerto is decidedly shifted towards high frequencies; the low register serves only as a harmonic determinant, a sort of modern figured-bass. This treatment imparts a music-box character to the Concerto; hedonistic music, perhaps, but how charming! The absence of any "higher purpose" in Ravel's works endears his music to the devotees of pure sound. How easy it is to criticize Ravel for inconsequentiality of his subject-matter; but how much more difficult it is to find a rival in simple directness of his art!

This Concerto is perhaps more eclectic than Ravel's former works; or shall we say, more synthetic,—for it includes not only the radical elements of early impressionism, but more recent products as well, among them the American Blues. Since his visit to the U. S. A. in 1928, Ravel has been outspoken in his interest in American innovations, to wit, jazz. He had his picture taken with George Gershwin for whom he professed admiration. But it would be false reasoning to conclude that the digested jazz of his Sonata for Violin and Piano and the present Concerto are impressed by Gershwin. Ravel takes out of jazz only its characteristic major-minor complex, and while certain melodic figures—such as the drooping line from the super-dominant (major sixth of the melodic scale) to the major tonic via minor third—are peculiarly transatlantic, the treatment is so Ravelesque that all invidious analysis becomes pointless. At an early grade, Ravel was generally regarded, and with much foundation in comparative harmony, a trailer of Debussy; his subsequent career disproved this easy appraisal. By incorporating some idiomatic elements of jazz into his later works he does but acknowledge the musical interest of the Afro-American product; but he transforms it into music after his own fashion, and when he unites major with minor in the second movement of the Concerto, he transcends jazz's ambiguous tonality. Acclimatized in Ravel's score, jazz is no more American than Rudy Vallée is French.

In anticipation of a still more eagerly expected one-armed Concerto composed for a Viennese pianist who lost his right arm in the war, this Concerto, performed by Marguerite Long under the direction of Ravel in all capitals of Europe, marked the event of the season. I heard it under these auspices in Berlin with the great Philharmonic Orchestra as interpreter. Ravel conducted with less self-conscious-

* CONCERTO FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA. (Ravel) Marguerite Long (Piano) and Symphony Orchestra conducted by Maurice Ravel. Five sides and PAVANE POUR UNE INFANTE DÉFUNTE. (Ravel) One side. Symphony Orchestra conducted by Freitas Branco. Three 12-inch discs (C-LFX257 to C-LFX259) in album. \$6.

ness than usual and was never in the way of the musicians, who thus could display their virtuoso gifts unmolested. Marguerite Long played in her extraordinary fashion familiar to disc-consumers ever since the appearance on the market of her recording of the Chopin F Minor Concerto.

The German audience reacted eagerly to Ravel's music and the splendid performance; the applause was spontaneous and general. It was a popular success, and music critics became suspicious; dissenting postils appeared in the high-brow journals in France, Ravel's own country. The reception in America (where the Concerto was performed by different pianists in practically all symphonic cities) was more uniform, if not particularly enthusiastic. There is no question, however, that the Concerto will enter the enduring repertoire of most pianists. To the latter, the piano-part is a pleasing morsel; not too taxing, yet sufficiently florid to warrant pleasant hours of study, with perfection easily attainable. The idiom, as has been remarked, is eclectic; even Liszt makes his unexpected appearance in a characteristic ascending sequence in chromatic harmony; there is much display of pianistic virtuosity. But in the slow second movement, Ravel is his own elusive self; the languid, bare pianistic introduction creates a background for a celestial flute solo; few composers dare to write so economically. A stirring climax is built out of these tenuous elements, and the recession into harmonic desuetude is no less moving.

But the third movement is all light and sparkle, and the crack of the whip is again heard between two serried passages. The Concerto is not long; it takes five sides on the discs, and the sixth side is given to the well-known Pavane; it is conducted by Mr. Freitas Branco. The orchestra is anonymous: just Orchestre Symphonique. The performance and recording are good throughout: just listen to that whip coming through. Altogether, the album provides excellent relaxation of an autumn evening, in a rocking chair, with miniature score in hand. Ravel's works have been recorded with great expedience. Let us hope that other, less palatable, composers of our multiform modernity meet similar consideration in the executive offices of the gramophone industry.

[Continued from page 333]

cover of *Disques*. This cover was designed by Mr. Edward C. Smith, art editor of *Disques*. . . . The Brunswick release for October, a new recording of the *Moonlight* Sonata, played by Wilhelm Kempff, has not arrived, and the review will have to be held until the November issue.



PAUL ROSENFELD, who contributes an article on "The World of the Phonograph" to this issue, is the well known music critic. Born in New York City in 1890, he was educated at private and public schools, at Riverview Military Academy, Yale College, and the Columbia University School of Journalism. His first musical articles were published in *The New Republic*, to which journal he is still a frequent contributor. Later he became the musical editor of *The Dial*. He is the author of a novel *The Boy in the Sun*, and of several volumes and numerous articles of musical, literary and artistic criticism. Among these are *By Way of Art*, *Musical Chronicle* and *An Hour with American Music*. He is at present working on another novel.

Three Notable Beethoven Albums*

Artur Schnabel Records Two Concertos and Three Sonatas

Though few will openly confess it, there are occasions when even the most enthusiastic concert-goer views his tickets with acute distaste, thinking of a dozen things he would rather do than attend the concert. Likewise there are times when even the most ardent record collector eyes his sagging shelves somewhat dubiously, a little chastened by the amount of money they represent and finding himself, much to his surprise and consternation, repelled rather than attracted by them.

It is, to drag a hoary platitude back into service, possible to have too much of anything. It is similarly possible to submit oneself to too much listening, so that all music, in such sour moments, seems tasteless and insipid. Those who proudly boast that they can listen to this or that piece of music (usually the Fifth Symphony or the *Unfinished*) at any place, under any circumstances, and an unlimited number of times are either kidding themselves, indulging in a palpable untruth, or else belong to a much harder race than the rest of us and so come most logically under the heading of a term that, in another field of human endeavor, is called Masochism. And one is reluctantly forced to think much the same thing about those who pretend to be able to listen to any music ("so long as it be good") at any time, regardless of their mood and inclinations.

But such periods of revulsion of feeling, of turning momentarily against that which is most deeply cherished, are commonly not dangerously frequent. Fortunately, most of us recover without any noticeably harmful results—sometimes, indeed, feeling much better for the experience. It is sets like these Beethoven albums that work a cure most quickly and efficiently in the record collector, removing all gnawing doubts from his mind and hastening him back to his turntable and discs with renewed enthusiasm.

Considering the amount of money we are compelled to pay for our recorded music, we are theoretically entitled to only the best music given by the best artists and recorded in the best manner possible, but everybody knows that actually this is very seldom the case. Moreover, only a few idealists, with head and both feet in the clouds and sustained by a firm if irrational belief that *impossible* and *can't* are immoral and meaningless words, object very strenuously to the fact. Most of us, realizing that some thousands of years of patient effort have not yet succeeded

* PIANO SONATAS in *F Sharp Major*, Op. 78; in *E Minor*, Op. 90; in *C Minor*, Op. 111. (Beethoven) Fourteen sides. Artur Schnabel (Piano). Seven 12-inch discs in album. Beethoven Sonata Society Set No. 1. \$14.

CONCERTO NO. 1 in *C Major*, Op. 15. (Beethoven) Artur Schnabel (Piano) and London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Malcolm Sargent. Nine sides and FÜR ELISE. (Beethoven) One side. Artur Schnabel (Piano). Five 12-inch discs (V-DB1690 to V-DB1694) in album. \$14.

CONCERTO NO. 5 in *E Flat Major* ("Emperor"), Op. 73. (Beethoven) Ten sides. Artur Schnabel (Piano) and London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Malcolm Sargent. Five 12-inch discs (V-DB1685 to V-DB1689) in album. \$10.

in eradicating human fallibility, know that such a fabulous state of affairs as human perfection will never be achieved and so compromise more or less complacently in the immemorial manner by giving grateful thanks for small blessings.

And sometimes these blessings turn out to be something considerably more than small. Such, for the collector of phonograph records, are these Schnabel recordings, offering that rare combination of fine music ideally recorded and interpreted. Beethoven is surely no stranger to the phonograph, and there have been months—notably during the centennial activities of a few years ago—when records of his music far outnumbered the seventeen issued here. But it is no exaggeration to say that never before in the history of the phonograph have we had so many Beethoven records released in one month that were so superbly recorded and interpreted as we have in these three albums. Quite apart from the musical value of these sets, they are remarkable for the faithful manner in which they are reproduced.

II

The three sonatas belong to the first album of the Beethoven Sonata Society. Discussing them here is rather useless, since they are available to subscribers only, and to whet appetites that are hardly likely to be satisfied is an act of cruelty not to be countenanced in these days of improved human kindness and goodwill. For the benefit of those who intend to subscribe to the second album when it is announced, however, it may not be amiss to describe briefly the contents of the first album, commenting on the manner in which H.M.V., the sponsor of the Society, performed its part of the agreement. The three sonatas are Opp. 78, 90 and 111. They occupy the fourteen sides of seven 12-inch discs, which are enclosed in an attractive album. Included with the records is a handsomely printed booklet written by the noted English critic, Eric Blom. Mr. Blom discusses the Beethoven piano sonatas in general, pointing out their significance and value, and then proceeds to a more detailed consideration of the three included in the album. His text is illustrated by musical quotations, and all in all the booklet is one of the finest yet issued with an album set.

As is to be expected, Schnabel plays the sonatas perfectly. There have been some excellent interpretations of Beethoven's sonatas recorded, but nothing yet issued approaches Schnabel's fine, clean, forceful playing. The recorders have done as impressive a job as Schnabel. The piano is recorded with wonderful clarity and fidelity; the treble doesn't tinkle and the bass is something more than a confused rumble. The recording is always clean-cut and incisive, and the tone in general is excellent. Listen, if you are lucky enough to own the records or have a friend who does, to the first record side of Op. 111 for a particularly fine example of piano reproduction.

It is too bad that the records aren't generally available. The subscription idea is a good one—providing it is the only way possible for the works to be recorded. But the subscription idea was intended for the recording of works that would not be likely to have a wide popular appeal and so could not be released in the normal manner. Is it an actual fact that Artur Schnabel playing Beethoven sonatas would not attract a wide circle of record buyers? Is not the sales value of this set fully equal to that of dozens of albums that have been issued in the past?

That conjecture may be quite wrong, but one remains a little dubious. It is an unfortunate situation, for to issue the records later to the general public would be unfair to the subscribers to the Society, many of whom probably joined because they understood that to be the only manner in which they could have the records. And to issue the set later on at a higher price than that charged to Society members offers no satisfactory solution, for record prices are already sufficiently high, and to increase them, especially at this time, is not likely to win much applause from the record-buying public.

III

But anyone who wishes to do so may buy the recordings of the two concertos, Nos. 1 and 5, which are played by Schnabel and the London Symphony Orchestra under Sargent. No. 1 has not been recorded before and so appears here for the first time on records; No. 5, otherwise known as the *Emperor*, has been done once before—by Wilhelm Backhaus and the Royal Albert Hall Orchestra. But the set was recorded several years ago, before recording had reached its present degree of perfection, and so it doesn't stand comparison with the new album.

The First Concerto has not previously been recorded, and it is very seldom played in public. A hasty glance through the programs of several of the leading symphony orchestras for the past few years fails to reveal a single performance, and in the complete list of works performed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra since its first year the First Concerto is absent. This condition is partly understandable, for the Concerto is not very significant or important music. But it has a charm and youthful freshness that ought to give it a certain popularity among music lovers, and in any case there are plenty of soloists who occupy themselves with music that is not only not greatly superior to this Concerto but has also the additional disadvantage of being rather too frequently heard.

Actually the C Major Concerto, while the first to be published, is not the first but the second of Beethoven's five piano concertos. It was written in 1797 and published in 1801, while what is now known as the Second Piano Concerto in B Flat, Op. 19, was written some two years earlier than the C Major. Both of these concertos were written a little prior to the First Symphony, with which the C Major Concerto has much in common. Charm, grace and melody are the outstanding features of both, and each shows clearly the influences of Mozart and Haydn, as is quite natural. Neither, however, is merely a weak imitation of the works of Beethoven's noted predecessors. Both reveal plenty of indications of the later and more mature Beethoven. Heard from so fine a performance as that given it on these records, the Concerto makes delightful listening. It overflows with life and high spirits, and though it is not so compact as the later works and lacks any trace of profundity, it nevertheless reveals, in somewhat immature form, much of the vigor and fire that marked the composer's later and more significant periods.

There are three movements—Allegro con brio, Largo and Rondo. The orchestration is more advanced than that in the earlier Concerto—Op. 19, now known as the Second—for clarinets, trumpets and drums were added to the score. The first movement opens brilliantly, with impressive vigor and freshness. The Largo is expressive and delicate, with the piano most conspicuous. The Rondo is a brisk, charming movement, tending now and then toward a pomposity that is more

amusing than deeply impressive. Schnabel's playing here reveals the same high competence that was present in the sonatas, though in the Concerto, of course, he has a less difficult task. The Concerto might be called many things, but it could never be called "deep" or "heavy" music. As if inspired by Schnabel's example, the London Symphony performs its part of the task with a dash and verve that are eminently suitable in such sprightly music. The recording is as clean-cut and flawless as the performance.

Occupying the final side of the set is a little Bagatelle in A Minor, without an opus number, entitled *Für Elise am 27 April zur Erinnerung von L. v. Beethoven*. It receives the same fine treatment as that accorded the Concerto.

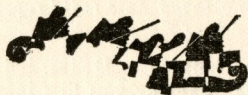
IV

A period of over ten years separates the First and Fifth Concertos, and in those years Beethoven had developed enormously, as a man as well as a musician. When he came to the *Emperor*, the first six symphonies and the *Rasoumowsky* Quartets were already behind him, and the Concerto was thus one of the works of the period the productions of which enjoy such widespread popularity today. The Concerto, composed in Vienna in 1809, was not written under the most favorable conditions. The French were in the vicinity of Vienna at the time, and Beethoven, like the other inhabitants, was frequently annoyed by the sound of firing, at such times leaving his lodgings near the walls of the city and taking refuge in the cellar of a relative's house. Nevertheless, in spite of the distracting influences, the Concerto was completed. But it remained unperformed and unpublished until 1811, when it was played by Friedrich Schneider, a pianist and composer of some fame at the time.

The title *Emperor* was bestowed upon the work by others than Beethoven, but it makes a convenient tag by which to identify it, especially since the majesty and grandeur of the music justify its use.

The *Emperor* Concerto is frequently played today, and so it is well known to most of us, and since all the necessary facts about it, as well as a detailed analysis illustrated by musical quotations, are given in a leaflet in the album, it will not be necessary to repeat that information here. But if most of us know the *Emperor* pretty well, it is reasonably safe to say that few of us have ever heard it played as it is played here. The *Emperor* calls for much greater subtlety on the part of the soloist than does the First Concerto, but Schnabel is more than equal to the occasion, giving a performance that mingles delicacy, subtlety, understanding, insight, imagination and power in the most felicitous manner possible. But he is a pianist whom it is far better to hear than to talk about. The London Symphony again gives him excellent support, and to comment on the recording would be simply to repeat the encomiums showered upon the other two albums.

R. J. M.



Recorded Programs

[Such a vast quantity of good music is now available for the phonograph that quite frequently records of more than ordinary merit are overlooked. It will be the purpose of this page to call attention to such records. Readers are invited to send in their suggestions. Records which appeared prior to the appearance of Disques and hence have never been reviewed in these pages will be given preference. All types and makes will be considered, and an effort will be made to avoid the hackneyed and excessively familiar.]

SCHUMANN "Schneeglöckchen"; "Der Nussbaum"; "Er ist's"; "Aufträge"

Elisabeth Schumann (Soprano) with piano accompaniment by George Reeves.

[One 12-inch disc (V-D1824). \$2]

Schneeglöckchen notes the approach of spring, and *Er ist's* revels in its actual presence—both lovely bits. *Aufträge* with a "bewitching archness" sends its messages to the beloved to a delightful accompaniment which simply races. These three were written by Schumann nearly ten years after the "wonder year" of 1840 (which for too many song-lovers marks the end of his important lieder writing), and they deserve to rank with his best. *Der Nussbaum* is a heavenly thing. It is interesting to compare the gentle swaying of the boughs of the almond with the fluttering of the leaves of Schubert's *Lindenbaum* . . . These utterly charming songs are exactly suited to Elisabeth Schumann's light soprano voice, and the combination on this record is irresistible . . . Accompaniments and recording are good.

R. W. S.

DELIUS

Brigg Fair

London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Geoffrey Toye.

[Two 12-inch discs (V-D1442 and V-D1443). \$2 each]

There is another recording of this work which should be mentioned at the outset. It is a Columbia set played by a symphony orchestra conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham, acknowledged to be one of the finest of Delius' interpreters. Unfortunately, we have not heard that recording, but those who have say it is magnificent. The present carefully prepared and well realized records, however, are excellent, so that it is likely that either set you obtain will give you a good idea of the music. The important thing, in any case, is that you hear one or the other of the two recordings. In fact, even though it may seem a little reckless, it is recommended that you throw discretion to the winds and purchase one of the sets. Delius' rhapsody is not one which fully reveals itself at the first couple of hearings; it demands patient and careful listening, and to hear the work in a dealer's booth is not a fair test. Heard at home, under the proper conditions, the records are likely sooner or later to convince the owner that they contain some of the noblest music written in this century—music restful and cleansing in its serenity, impressive and stirring in its quiet eloquence . . . In 1905, while collecting folk-songs in Lincolnshire, Percy Grainger came upon a singer named Joseph Taylor who sang a song beginning:

*It was on the fift' of August,
Er, the weather fine and fair,
Unto Brigg Fair I did repair
For love I was inclined.*

Grainger not only passed the tune on to Delius, but he himself arranged it for tenor solo and chorus. Delius' rhapsody was first introduced in England in 1908, and subsequently it was widely played in Germany. But in this country no one can complain that it is over-worked by our orchestral conductors.

ORCHESTRA



HAYDN

V-EH762

to

V-EH764

IMPORTED

SYMPHONY IN G MAJOR ("*Oxford*"), Op. 66, No. 2. Six sides. London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Hans Weisbach. Three 12-inch discs. \$1.75 each.

Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 436.

V-EH765

to

V-EH767

SYMPHONY IN C MAJOR (*No. 97*). Six sides. London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Hans Weisbach. Three 12-inch discs. \$1.75 each.

Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 483.

Haydn's bicentennial, observed last March 31, passed by without the phonograph companies doing anything about it. Either the depression or the excessive attention they gave to the Beethoven and Schubert centennials a couple of years ago caused them to overlook one of the most genial and attractive composers that ever lived. Better late than never, however, and since the bicentennial date the Haydn String Quartet Society has been organized by H. M. V. and the two symphonies listed above have been recorded by the same company. Inasmuch as neither of these symphonies has been recorded before, they make particularly appropriate issues for the bicentennial year. Counting the Columbia recording of a Symphony in G Major, which was reviewed but not identified in last month's *Disques*, these two sets swell the total number of Haydn recorded symphonies to eight—not a very large number, considering the great number of symphonies that the composer tossed off during his lifetime, but nevertheless one that includes some first-rate recordings.

The *Oxford* Symphony, though written in 1788, derives its name from the fact that Haydn selected it for the ceremonies in 1792 when Oxford, at the suggestion of Dr. Burney, conferred the degree of Mus.D. upon him. It is a delightful symphony and ought surely to be played more frequently than it is by our major symphony orchestras, which overlook many of Haydn's finest works. The Symphony is in the following movements: Allegro spiritoso, Adagio, Menuetto and Presto. The first two movements occupy a disc each, the last two a side of a disc each. The lovely, well-rounded introduction leads into some very fiery music. It has all the breathless leaps ahead and sudden pauses for breath that make Haydn so exhilarating. The slow movement is both charming and beautiful, with all sorts of delightful touches. The sturdy Minuet is all too short, and so is the breath-taking Finale.

The conductor is a new name to us, but he is obviously thoroughly at home in Haydn's music, and no fault can be found with his reading of this spirited, irresistible music. The London Symphony gives a capital performance, and the recording sets forth the music with a high degree of realism.

The Symphony in G Major is No. 97 in the new Breitkopf and Härtel listing



of the complete edition of Haydn's works, but it is No. 7 in the old. It belongs to the series of twelve symphonies that Haydn wrote for Johann Peter Salomon between 1791 and 1795. The Symphony recorded here was written in 1791 or 1792. It consists of the usual four movements, designated as follows: Adagio—Vivace, Adagio ma non troppo, Menuetto, and Presto assai. The movements are distributed on the records as in the *Oxford* Symphony. Like the *Oxford*, the scoring calls for flutes, oboes, bassoons, horns and trumpets in pairs, timpani and strings. Haydn's usual slow introduction is somewhat shorter here than in many of his symphonies, and soon after the record begins we are bouncing ahead as gayly as could be wished. The leisurely slow movement is full of effective touches, and the lively Minuet will start the feet to beating time. The amusing Finale, a lusty Rondo, is Haydn at his best, and contains some of his most skilful and effective music. This is another Symphony that ought to be heard more frequently in the concert hall.

The performance is praiseworthy and the recording entirely satisfactory. These sets merit a place on the shelf beside Toscanini's recording of the *Clock*, Koussevitzky's version of the *Surprise*, and the Vienna Philharmonic's recording of the Symphony in G Major (No. 13). The collector equipped with them has an efficient cure for melancholia.

**PETERSON-
BERGER**

V-X2408

IMPORTED

FRÖSÖBLOMSTER: (a) *Sommarsång*; (b) *Vid Fröso Kyrka*.
Two sides. Symphony Orchestra. One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

Olof Wilhem Peterson-Berger, born in Ullanger, Angermanland, in 1867, is a Swedish composer, poet and musical critic. Grove's tells us that in composition he "has endeavored to create national music, specifically Swedish, based on the folk-melody." He has written many songs, two symphonies, and various instrumental and dramatic works. According to the *Dictionary of Modern Music and Musicians*, these selections from *Frösöblomster* were originally piano pieces. Arranged for orchestra they are not very effective. The music is dull and stodgy and lacking in interest. The orchestra, unnamed on the record, reveals no unusual merits. The recording is excellent.

R. STRAUSS

V-7589

to

V-7593

DON QUIXOTE: *Variations on a Theme of Knightly Character*. Ten sides. New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra conducted by Thomas Beecham, with Alfred Wallenstein ('Cello), Michel Piastro (Violin), and René Pollain (Viola). Five 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set M-144. \$10.

V-L11633

to

V-L11635S

DON QUIXOTE. Long-playing version.
Two 12-inch discs: \$3 each. One 12-inch single-faced disc: \$1.50.

Reviewed in last month's *Disques*. The long-playing version maintains the high standard of recording set by such issues as *Gurre-Lieder* and *Skyscrapers*.

WAGNER
V-1584

{ DIE MEISTERSINGER: *Prelude to Act 3*. Two sides. Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Leopold Stokowski.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 825.

V-EG2486
IMPORTED

{ DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER: *Prelude to Act 3*. One side and
LOHENGRIN: *Prelude to Act 3*. One side. Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Erich Orthmann.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

This month's Wagnerian records, by one of those coincidences so frequent in the phonograph industry, are confined to recordings of preludes to the third acts of three of his operas. Only one of these preludes—that to Act 3 of the *Flying Dutchman*—has not been recorded before, the others being available in plenty of versions. But though the *Prelude to Act 3* of *Die Meistersinger* is as familiar on records as it is in the concert hall, this version by the Philadelphia Orchestra more closely approaches an ideal recording than any of the others we have heard. The music itself, describing Sachs' attempt to achieve contentment through renunciation, is one of the loveliest and most moving parts of *Die Meistersinger* (the complete recording of which is still being impatiently awaited). It is quiet, reflective music and makes a highly effective introduction to the final act of the opera. The performance by the Philadelphia Orchestra is beautifully done. The admirable quality of the organization's strings is effectively displayed, and the recording has that rich, full effect that has made the Philadelphia Orchestra's records so popular.

The *Prelude to Act 3* of the *Flying Dutchman*, as was mentioned above, is a first recording. It is a brief but vigorous piece of music, utilizing material heard earlier in the opera, such as *Senta's Ballad* and the *Sailor's Chorus*. . . . The *Prelude to Act 3* of *Lohengrin* has always been a phonographic favorite, and even back in the acoustical days there was Karl Muck's fine version made with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. This version has a rough vigor about it that is not unattractive, and the recording is excellent, as it is also in the *Flying Dutchman* piece.

GLUCK
C-G50337D

{ IPHIGENIA IN AULIS: *Overture*. (Gluck—arr. Wagner)
Two sides. Berlin Symphony Orchestra conducted by Frederick Weissmann. One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 917.

The Columbia black label series is notably enlarged this month with the above record and the two *Siegfried* discs noticed elsewhere in this issue. Excellent recordings of one of the greatest of operatic overtures and one of the greatest of operatic love duets at moderate prices—what more could the bargain hunter want? It is to be hoped that these splendid releases are supported in a suitably generous manner. The *Iphigenia in Aulis* Overture, with its severity and lofty impersonality, its clarity and nobility, appealed greatly to Wagner, who considered it Gluck's finest instrumental composition. Both Mozart and Wagner made arrangements of the ending of the work, the latter's version being used in this record. Dr. Weissmann's interpretation is poised and dignified, and it is well realized by the orchestra. The recording is all that it should be.





BACH
V-C2273
IMPORTED

SUITE IN G. (Bach — arr. Goossens) Two sides. London
Symphony Orchestra conducted by Eugène Goossens.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.75.

This altogether delightful record—one of the best of the month—ought surely to find its way into nearly every collection. It offers charming music splendidly played and recorded, and all this at a relatively small price. The music comes from Bach's French Suite in G Major, though the Menuet is taken from the French Suite in B Minor. Mr. Goossens' felicitous arrangement was originally made for a ballet diversion added to Sir Thomas Beecham's production of Bach's cantata, *Phoebus and Pan*, in the form of an opera in London some fifteen years ago. He has used an orchestra of practically classical size—three flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, three trumpets, timpani, and strings,—and as the music is actually a dance suite, the shunning of an elaborate modern orchestration is entirely appropriate. Bach's invigorating tunes, so supple, healthy, and well-rounded, come through cleanly and forcefully. If you enjoy the Suite in B Minor you are pretty certain to like this somewhat shorter work. Mr. Goossens' arrangement calls for seven divisions—Courante, Allemande, Bourrée, Menuet, Gavotte, Sarabande and Gigue. The Sarabande is omitted from this recording, but the others are included. The recording and performance are superlatively done, the latter having all the gusto and high spirits that the music demands.

CHABRIER
PD-67040
IMPORTED

ESPAÑA *Rhapsody*. Two sides. Lamoureux Orchestra conducted
by Albert Wolff. One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

CUI
GLAZOUNOW
PD-67041
IMPORTED

TARANTELE. (Cui) One side and
REVERIE POUR COR. (Glazounow) One side. Lamoureux
Orchestra conducted by Albert Wolff. One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

Those who like to ride the phonograph companies for their tendency to make numerous recordings of well established concert favorites are referred to Chabrier's *España*. It is a work always in demand at concerts, especially at summer concerts, and it seldom fails to produce impressive rounds of applause. It may therefore be safely assumed that the work is well liked. Yet *España* has not figured very conspicuously in the record catalogues. The Gramophone Shop's *Encyclopedia* lists only two versions: the Victor recording by the Detroit Symphony under Gabrilowitsch and a French Odeon version by the Colonne Orchestra under Pierné. If there are any others, we haven't heard of them.

So that this new Polydor recording, containing a concert favorite, oddly enough is almost in the nature of a novelty. Alfred Bruneau, writing of Chabrier, once said: "He played the piano as no one had before him, and as it will never be played again. To see Chabrier advancing toward a frail instrument from the back of a salon ornamented with women of elegance, and performing *España* in a fireworks of broken strings, hammers in pieces, and broken keys was a sight unspeakably droll, which also attained epic grandeur." And Edward Burlingame Hill, in his "Modern French Music," remarks that Chabrier's "first triumph, the orchestral rhapsody, *España*, is Spain seen through a Frenchman's eyes, but it is none the less a character-

istic expression of such typical French traits as cheerfulness, enthusiasm and striking humor. As such it is exceedingly important historically as the manifesto of a new spirit of independence, a return to an affirmation of the Gallic character and a rebuke to reactionary eclecticism . . . Not the least feature in *España* was its gorgeously coloristic orchestral style, the originality of which was as unexpected as its glowing musical speech."



The performance is brisk and vigorous, thoroughly attuned to the spirit of the music. The excellence of the recording of the Lamoureux Orchestra's records has often been remarked upon. It is almost always exceptionally good. Here it is little short of magnificent, the balance, clarity and tone being altogether admirable.

The other disc calls for less enthusiastic encomiums. The Cui *Tarantelle* is rather commonplace and offers nothing of interest, and the Glazounow *Reverie* is equally dull. The horn solo, which occupies most of the disc, reveals a performer of fine ability, but the music he is given to play is insipid. The recording here, too, is good.

BEETHOVEN { **EGMONT: Overture.** Two sides. Amsterdam Concertgebouw
C-68058D { Orchestra conducted by Willem Mengelberg.
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Miniature Score: Philharmonia No. 44.

Duplications are surely not uncommon these days, but it is a little unusual to come across one conductor with three electrical versions of the same work to his credit. Willem Mengelberg is such a conductor, and as far as we know he stands alone in the field. Two of his three whacks at the *Egmont* have been made with the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra and one with the Philharmonic-Symphony of New York. All of them are electrical. The early Concertgebouw disc and the later Philharmonic-Symphony recording—made for Columbia and Victor, respectively—are in no way outstanding in either recording or performance. This new version is vastly superior to the earlier records, and indeed it may be put down as the most satisfactory recording of the Overture yet issued, surpassing even Julius Prüwer's notable Polydor-Brunswick version. The fiery, vigorous music lends itself admirably to Mengelberg's incisive treatment, and the orchestra plays magnificently. The ending of the piece, in this recording, is particularly stirring. One of the features that make the Concertgebouw's discs so impressive is the concert-hall effect so often present in them, and this effect is present to a high degree in the new recording of the *Egmont*. A disc to be starred.

J. STRAUSS { **LIEBESLIEDER Waltzer.** Two sides. Vienna Philharmonic
V-C2339 { Orchestra conducted by Clemens Krauss.
IMPORTED { One 12-inch disc. \$1.75.

This little known waltz of Johann Strauss appeared recently in the Brunswick lists as one of the pieces included in that company's second album of Strauss waltzes. This version is to be preferred because of the clearer, smoother recording. It is a charming waltz, with a persuasive swing and lilt and a seductive turn of melody that will quickly recommend it to those who have a weakness for Johann Strauss. The performance by the Vienna Philharmonic is capitally done, and the recording permits the music to come through with convincing realism.



CONCERTO

MOZART

V-11324

to

V-11326

CONCERTO IN C MAJOR *for Flute, Harp and Orchestra.* (K. 299) Six sides. Marcel Moyse (Flute), Lily Laskine (Harp) and orchestra conducted by Piero Coppola. Three 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set M-141. \$5.

This well recorded set was reviewed from the imported pressings in the April, 1932, issue of *Disques*. The music is presented flawlessly by the artists and recorders, but the combination of instruments is not an especially attractive one—Mozart himself disliked both the flute and the harp—and the work as a whole is not to be ranked among the composer's most important output.

RAVEL

C-LFX257

to

C-LFX259

IMPORTED

CONCERTO *for Piano and Orchestra.* Marguerite Long (Piano) and Symphony Orchestra conducted by Maurice Ravel. Five sides and
PAVANE POUR UNE INFANTE DÉFUNTE: One side. Symphony Orchestra conducted by Freitas-Branco. Three 12-inch discs in album. \$6.

Mr. Slonimsky's article on the Concerto is published elsewhere in this issue, and there is nothing to be added to his remarks save a few comments on the handsome album in which the records are enclosed. The front cover, on both the outside and the inside, is decorated with excellent photographs of Ravel, Marguerite Long and M. Freitas-Branco, and the effect, presenting a sharp contrast to the usual rather monotonous appearance of albums, is surely striking. The idea is a good one and might be profitably adopted by the other companies. There is no necessity for record albums to present a dreary, uninteresting appearance. Book publishers long ago discovered the value of striking bindings and jackets. By adopting French Columbia's idea the manufacturers could appeal to the public through its eyes as well as its ears. Since the former are commonly more susceptible than the latter, perhaps the effect on sales would be beneficial.

BEETHOVEN

V-DB1690

to

V-DB1694

IMPORTED

CONCERTO IN C MAJOR, Op. 15. Artur Schnabel (Piano) and London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Malcolm Sargent. Nine sides and
FÜR ELISE. One side. Artur Schnabel (Piano). Five 12-inch discs in album. \$10.

V-DB1685

to

V-DB1689

IMPORTED

CONCERTO IN E FLAT ("*Emperor*"), Op. 73. Ten sides. Artur Schnabel (Piano) and London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Malcolm Sargent. Five 12-inch discs in album. \$10.

These two impeccably recorded and beautifully interpreted sets are noticed in the article "Three Notable Beethoven Albums," published elsewhere in this issue.

CHAMBER MUSIC



BEETHOVEN

C-68059D

to

C-68063D

QUARTET IN C SHARP MINOR, Op. 131. Ten sides. Léner String Quartet.
Five 12-inch discs in album. Columbia Set No. 175. \$7.50.

Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 2.

V-DB1639

to

V-DB1641

IMPORTED

QUINTET IN E FLAT MAJOR, Op. 16. Six sides. Société (Taffanel) des Instruments à Vent with Lucien Wurmser (Piano). Three 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 200.

The month's Beethoven records are exceptional in both quality and quantity. Beethoven is seldom absent altogether from the lists, but even during the centennial year a month in which excellent recordings of two piano concertos, an overture, a quartet, a quintet and several piano sonatas all appeared at once would have been considered more than normally abundant. That such a month should occur at this late date is another proof of Beethoven's extraordinary hold upon the musical world.

With the present release of the Léner String Quartet's recording of the Quartet in C Sharp Minor, Op. 131, the local Columbia Company's catalogue now includes twelve of the sixteen string quartets. Those still missing from the domestic lists are: Opp. 18, No. 5; 74; 127; and 132. The C Sharp Minor Quartet has been available through the importers in a French Columbia version played by the Capet String Quartet, but the inclusion of the work on the local lists in a superior version by the Léniers will make it both cheaper and more easily obtainable.

It would be interesting to know how generously the public responds to this release, for in many ways it may be considered the most important issue of the month. It lacks the immediate appeal of the concertos, and it will not carry away large and easily pleased audiences as some of the symphonies do, but in the long run it will yield pleasures deeper and more moving than any of these other works. The Beethoven string quartets were covered by Joseph Cottler in the July and August issues of *Disques* for 1931, and in connection with the new recording of Op. 131 we could do no better than to quote Mr. Cottler's remarks on the last five quartets.

It is in any case certain that our composer's third period leap forward and out of sight of his contemporaries was transacted by bracing himself against a wall of musical thought which two generations had forgotten and which was, therefore, old enough to be new—by taking a step backward, a form of strategy with which we are so familiar today. That is how it happened that three of the last five quartets have more than four movements or sections . . . that that unsurpassed musical work, Op. 131, begins with a fugue . . . Now these fugues are not like any other in literature. To Beethoven the fugue was not an end in itself. "Into the old mold handed down to us, we must pour an element of genuine poetry," he expressed it. One could render a passable imitation of a Bach fugue, for instance. But the queerness, the eeriness, the unfugal character of these fugues is



impossible of similar conception, because, while the essential quality of any other fugue is its drive, the slow fugue in Op. 131, as well as the movement in the old Lydian mode, is blank, spellbound, as immobile as the façade of a deserted cathedral in the moonlight. (You can imagine anything you please. Beethoven, in those ultimate deeds of the human spirit, Opp. 131, 132, gives you all possible worlds.) . . . Yet in Beethoven's day, those five quartets, which are beyond compare, mystified his audience and as public events were failures. It is fitting that Tschaikowsky should hate them. The reason for that is not hard to find. In the first place the scores are hellishly difficult to perform, and Beethoven could only supervise their rehearsal with his eyes. Then, they are individual in style, elliptical in expression, and, in their emotional demand, too exhaustive for people used to easy satisfaction. They can be followed only with shut eyes and the most intimate of contact—on discs, perhaps. Of course they are mystical. The older a thinker gets, the more apart he is and the more incomprehensible. Then, if ever, he ought to have one to understand him. But the quartets have structure. There is a tonal architecture that directs the progression of key signatures always. Op. 131, for example, has six sections, one for each of the tones in the so-called cadence formula of C-sharp minor. The structure, in fact, is so rigorous that Tovey interprets Beethoven's last period as one of inexorable logic, where each note can be deduced from the preceding . . . He [Beethoven] showed the best of taste . . . in considering Op. 131 in C Sharp Minor his best quartet. He might have gone further and called Opp. 131 and 132 his best works. Only the *Missa Solemnis* and the Ninth Symphony are in the same class. But they are as safe from objective literary appraisal as is a sunrise from the summit of Mont Blanc or the mystery of the sacrament . . . To me, Op. 131 is a sublime oratorio with the same sincerity, ecstasy and rarefaction that Franck displays.

The Léners' performance is not unworthy of the music, and the recording matches the excellence of the rendition. The wise collector, anxious to add some Beethoven discs to his collection, will momentarily forget the symphonies and obtain some of the quartets. The fine performance and recording given Op. 31 commend it to your attention.

The Quintet, Op. 16, for piano, oboe, clarinet, horn and bassoon, is an early work, written before 1797, and has nothing in common with the Quartet. It is melodious and charming, with many effective touches for the unusual instrumental combination employed. The work is in four movements. Beethoven later arranged it for a string quartet and marked it Op. 75, and Grove's, taking Ries' word for authority, says that he also arranged it as a quartet for piano, violin, viola and 'cello. The performance here is deft and accomplished, and special praise is due the fine recording. This is a work not often encountered at public performances, and therefore its appearance on discs is most welcome.

**DEBUSSY
TEDESCHI**

C-CQX16491

and

C-CQX16492

IMPORTED

SECOND SONATA. (Debussy) A. Tassinari (Flute), Celestina Gandolfi (Harp), and F. Mora (Viola). Three sides and

DUE PEZZI PER ARPA: (a) *Marionette*; (b) *Pattuglia Spagnola*. (L. M. Tedeschi) One side. Celestina Gandolfi (Harp). Two 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

Chamber music recordings this month seem to be mainly duplications of previously recorded works—duplications, it may be added, that in most cases were not badly needed. The Sonata recorded here, for example, has already been recorded—by Odeon, on three 10-inch discs. That recording enlisted the services of Marcel Moyse (flute), Lily Laskine (harp), and M. Ginot (viola). These artists are fully the equal of those performing on the above records, and the Odeon recording, often far inferior to the best modern standards, was in that case quite satisfactory.

Debussy, in his later years, planned "Six Sonates pour divers instruments, par Claude Debussy, musicien français," and in these he wanted to offer tribute to the French composers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and establish his kinship with them. Unfortunately, he died before he could complete the set, but a Sonata for 'Cello and Piano (1915), this Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp (1916) and a Sonata for Violin and Piano (1916-17) were published. All of these sonatas, it is worth noting, have been recorded.

The Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp, with its clarity and delicacy and its nicely balanced design, is full of felicitous touches. It is in three movements—Pastorale, Interlude and Finale. The melodies are poignant and appealing, and the effect is one of understatement and suggestion rather than that of the full, resounding German sentences from which he sought to escape. Those accustomed only to the latter will find the Debussy work unsatisfying and disquieting. But its delicately-cut charm is unescapable to those familiar with Debussy's mode of expression. The performance is sensitive and competent, and the recording offers no cause for complaint. . . . The two pieces by L. M. Tedeschi, on the odd side of the set, are attractive.

BRAHMS

C-GQX10523

to

C-GQX10525

IMPORTED

TRIO IN C MAJOR, Op. 87. Six sides. Alfred Casella (Piano), A. Poltronieri (Violin), and A. Bonucci ('Cello).
Three 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 247.

This Trio is the only work by Brahms in this form that has been adequately recorded, and therefore the records listed above bring no new material to the phonograph. Considering the paucity of recordings of Brahms' chamber music, pointed out by a correspondent last month, one wishes that Italian Columbia, the sponsor of the set, had selected instead the Third Trio in C Minor, Op. 101, or the First Trio in B Major, Op. 8, since neither of these works has been satisfactorily recorded. The Polydor recording of the Second Trio in C Major, issued a couple of years ago, is not a notable set but it is a satisfactory one and succeeds in giving the listener an excellent idea of what the music sounds like. The new recording of the work is not so much superior to the earlier set as to make the duplication particularly desirable, especially when there are other trios of Brahms that ought to be recorded. But perhaps before the centennial activities next winter are over the manufacturers will release recordings of these works, so that it may be a little early to complain. One hopes so, at least.

Brahms wrote four trios for violin, piano and 'cello, but one of them, a very early work, is without opus number. It was written during his early days in Hamburg, where he worked at transcriptions and arrangements for publishers. These arrangements he signed "G. W. Marks" and his own compositions, "Karl Würth." The early Trio bears the latter signature. The Trio in B Major, now known as the first, was composed sometime before 1853, while the Second, here recorded, was written early in the '80s and published in 1883. Thus when Brahms came to it some of his finest achievements were already behind him and he was at



the height of his powers. Richard Specht, in his book on the composer, finds the Trio in C Major "apparently one of the least pleasing" of the chamber works. "But although distant and thankless at first, it reveals itself as especially attractive after repeated hearings. Its sharp outlines make it one of the clearest and most decisive works he ever produced, and from movement to movement it rises to higher regions. The first opens with a tense thematic phrase that afterwards develops so laboriously that it can hardly be called a real subject in spite of its forceful beginning. . . . The other three movements are very different. The second, in the Brahmsian *chiaroscuro*, has a kind of shamefaced melodic fervour that evaporates directly you listen attentively. The third, with its downward-gliding triplet figure and its halting chromaticism, seems of a sudden to throw off its gray cloak and to stand before us in bright armour, merrily dealing out blows. The fourth flutters prettily and anxiously, like a swallow that tries to say that it is time for nesting. . . . The Trio is one of the compositions in which Brahms strives to make a personal confession; but he wishes it to remain untouched by the mob, whom it repels by sharp corners and edges, and here and there by obscurities; these, however, are soon elucidated by those who listen with true affection."

Those who have read Mr. Specht's book and recall the singular things he had to say about the Symphony No. 1 and the Double Concerto will not take his warnings about the Trio too seriously, for they will remember that he issued similar warnings about them. The Trio, listened to carefully, is abundantly rewarding, and more than likely its appeal will be felt immediately. If not, the phonograph enables you to follow Mr. Specht's advice about repetition very easily. The Trio impresses the listener at the first hearing much as the Quintet in F Minor does: not pleasing or gracious but undeniably moving. And, as Mr. Specht points out, close study and familiarity will soon round out the sharp corners and edges.

The performance here is a careful, supple one, and the recording is commendable. The Finale is obviously cut.



PIANO

CHOPIN
DEBUSSY
B-85014

{ WALTZ IN E MINOR (*Posthumous*). (Chopin) One side and
TOCCATA IN C SHARP MINOR. (Debussy) One side.
Alexander Brailowsky (Piano). One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

The familiar Chopin waltz is satisfactorily played, but the version included in the recent Columbia album by Robert Lortat was done with more finish and ease. It is a graceful waltz, however, and this admirably recorded version ought to attract those who want a separate record of the piece. The Debussy Toccata is done with the proper vigor, and a special word of praise is necessary for the recording. Brailowsky has usually fared well in this respect, but in the present instance the reproduction is unusually good, his piano sounding convincingly realistic.

MENDELSSOHN

C-2694D

SONGS WITHOUT WORDS: Op. 19b, No. 3, in *A Major*; No. 6, in *G Minor*; Op. 102, No. 5, in *A Major*. Two sides. Ignaz Friedman (Piano). One 10-inch disc. 75c.



This record is taken from the English Columbia album of nine of Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words*. Musical reflections of passing moods and emotions aroused by some scene or event, these miniatures, though slight in content and fairly easy of execution, are graceful and poetic, eminently enjoyable to listen to. Three of them are included on this little disc. It is capably played and recorded and the price appeals to the current condition of most pocketbooks.

OPERA



WAGNER

C-G50338D

and

C-G50339D

SIEGFRIED: (a) *Heil dir, Sonne*; (b) *Siegfried, Siegfried, seliger Held*; (c) *So berüh mich nicht*; (d) *Ob jetzt ich dein*. Four sides. Margaret Bäumer (Soprano) and Reimer Minten (Tenor) with orchestra conducted by Frederick Weissmann. Two 12-inch discs. \$1.25 each.

Columbia deserves the gratitude of all collectors of Wagnerian records for issuing these splendid discs in the black label series, thereby making them accessible to many who—pressed somewhat painfully by the Hooverizing now so prevalent—might otherwise have been compelled to pass them by. The records would be good ones at any reasonable price, but at that asked for them they constitute a bargain of more than ordinary attractiveness. They offer the major portion of the magnificent duet between Siegfried and Brünnhilde that occurs at the end of the third act of *Siegfried*. The duet, of course, has been recorded before, and it is included in the Victor album of excerpts from the music drama. The two records containing the duet, however, are the weakest in the album, and a good closing duet to improve that otherwise excellent set has been needed. That function the present discs will perform very acceptably. They are beautifully recorded, the orchestra coming through powerfully but not sufficiently so as to obscure the singers, both of whom are very good. Dr. Weissmann's accompaniment proves him to be an admirable Wagnerian conductor.

MOZART

B-90238

COSÌ FAN TUTTE: *Un aura amorosa*. One side and
DON GIOVANNI: *Il mio tesoro intanto*. One side. Koloman von Pataky (Tenor) with orchestra conducted by Julius Prüwer. One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

Phonograph records cover almost all types of music, but Mozart's operas as yet have been very inadequately treated. Although there are already plenty of Italian operas recorded in complete form, thus far not a single Mozart opera has been



issued even in abridged form. Here is an omission that the recorders should remedy as soon as possible, for recording has now reached the point where ample justice could be done to one of these delightful works. In the meantime, there is a fairly good list of excerpts available, and to this list no company has contributed more generously than Polydor. This latest contribution, now repressed by Brunswick, introduces a new singer, Koloman von Pataky. Unfortunately, his voice is in no way remarkable and calls for no resounding encomiums. Yet he is given beautiful music to sing, and he does it in an unobjectionable manner. The orchestral accompaniment, conducted by the unfailingly reliable Julius Prüwer, comes out well, and the recording is excellent.

D'ALBERT
PA-B48192
IMPORTED

TIEFLAND: Act 1, Scene 8—*Meine Liebe, mein Glück*; (b)
Act 2, Scene 8—*Nun hab' ich nichts als dich mehr auf der Welt*.
Two sides. Margaret Bäumer (Soprano) and Gerhard Hüsch
(Baritone) with orchestra conducted by Frederick Weissmann.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

The recent death of Eugen d'Albert will lend this disc somewhat more than ordinary interest. *Tiefland*, brought out in Prague in 1903, is one of his most popular operas in Europe, though it is very seldom heard in this country. These two excerpts, setting forth duets by Marta and Sebastiano, are well sung and recorded, though the music offers nothing of exceptional interest. A leaflet containing the words of the duets accompanies the disc, but there is no English translation.

VERDI
V-7582

UN BALLO IN MASCHERA: Act 2—*Ma dall' arido stelo*;
Act 3—*Morro, ma prima in grazia*. Two sides. Elisabeth Reth-
berg (Soprano) with orchestra. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Elisabeth Rethberg's singing is always a pleasure to listen to, and here she renders two selections somewhat less hackneyed than most operatic excerpts. Moreover, they suit her voice admirably. The selection from Act 2, in which Amelia confesses her love for the governor, is a beautiful aria, and it is expressively sung. The reverse side sets forth Amelia's plea to her husband to let her say farewell to her child before he kills her. This is similarly well done. Both sides are provided with adequate orchestral accompaniments, and the recording is good.

**LEON-
CAVALLO
FLOTOW**
V-7720

PAGLIACCI: *Vesti la giubba*. (Leoncavallo) One side and
MARTHA: *M'appari*. (Flotow) One side. Enrico Caruso
(Tenor) and Victor Symphony Orchestra.
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Caruso's powerful voice, though never electrically recorded, can still be heard on acoustical discs, and some of them, when reproduced on an electrical machine, sound surprisingly well. Now, by some engineering thaumaturgy, RCA Victor has succeeded in making them sound even better. The old orchestral accompaniment, thin and stodgy at best, has somehow been erased and a new one added; the voice, well

balanced with the new accompaniment, comes out more naturally; and the surfaces are smooth and quiet. The effect is very similar to that of a modern electrical recording. Admirers of Caruso's voice will rejoice at the opportunity of hearing him sing these familiar arias with the proper orchestral support and it is to be hoped that the same process can be applied as successfully to some of the other Caruso discs.



CHORAL



**HUMPER-
DINCK**

V-C2429

IMPORTED

THE MIRACLE: *Selections*. Two sides. London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Einar Nilson. One 12-inch disc. \$1.75.

The recent London revival of the *Miracle* is probably responsible for this excellently produced disc. The selections given are: *Children's Spring Song*; *Mary, Holy*; *Lord of Glory*; *Valse, Coronation Dance*; *Christmas Music*; *Salve Regina*. The music is attractive, and it is admirably presented by the London Symphony with a chorus and organ. The conductor, Einar Nilson, was a close friend of Humperdinck's and has conducted many revivals of the *Miracle* in Europe and America.

**TSCHAI-
KOWSKY**

C-G2693D

DER ABEND NAHT. (Tschaikowsky-Alfy) Two sides. Emmy Bettendorf (Soprano) with chorus and orchestra conducted by Otto Dobrindt. One 10-inch disc. 75c.

This is a repressing from a Parlophone record that was reviewed on page 533 of the February, 1931, issue of *Disques*. It turns out to be an arrangement for soprano, chorus and orchestra of the Canzonetta from Tschaikowsky's Violin Concerto. In its original form, the piece is far more effective, but the present arrangement is not an unpleasing one, and the vocal parts do not seem out of place. Emmy Bettendorf's voice is, of course, the principal feature of the disc, and now and then a chorus or a solo violin discreetly join in. The recording is excellent.

**BEETHOVEN
RADZIWIŁŁ**

O-11641

IMPORTED

EGMONT: *Schluss-Monolog—Sanft und dringend fordert die Natur ihren letzten Zoll*. (Beethoven-Goethe) One side and

FAUST: *Monolog—Nun komm herab, kristallne, reine Schale*. (Anton Radziwill-Goethe) One side. Carl Ebert with chorus and orchestra conducted by Frederick Weissmann. One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

This disc, issued in connection with the one-hundredth anniversary of Goethe's death, will be of interest mainly to those familiar with the German language. Both sides are devoted chiefly to Prof. Carl Ebert's monologues. In the *Egmont* selection, there is now and then a quiet instrumental background, and at the end of the disc is heard what seems to be the ending of the *Egmont* Overture. . . .

New Victor Releases

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Martha—M'appari. Sung with orchestral accompaniment by Enrico Caruso on Victor Record No. 7720. List price, \$2.00.

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Don Quixote (Richard Strauss). Performed by the Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of New York conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham, on Victor Records Nos. 7589-7593 . . . and in automatic sequence Nos. 7594-7598. In album M-144 with explanatory booklet. List price, \$10.00. Also available on Long-Playing Records.

Concerto for Flute and Harp in C Major (Mozart). Played by Marcel Moyse (Flute) and Mlle. Lily Laskine (Harp) with orchestra conducted by Piero Coppola, on Victor Records Nos. 11324-11326 . . . and in automatic sequence Nos. 11327-11329. In album M-141 with explanatory booklet. List price, \$5.00.

RED SEAL RECORDS

De Captaine of de Marguerite (Ambrose-Bary-O'Hara) and

Sea Fever (Masfield-Ireland). Sung with piano accompaniment by Conrad Thibault on Victor Record No. 1583. List price, \$1.50.

Die Meistersinger — Prelude to Act 3 (Wagner). Parts 1 and 2. Played by Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra on Victor Record No. 1584. List price, \$1.50.

Un Ballo in Maschera — Ma Dall' Arido Stelo and

Un Ballo in Maschera—Morro, Ma Prima in Grazia. Sung with orchestral accompaniment by Mme. Elisabeth Rethberg on Victor Record No. 7582. List price, \$2.00.

Taps (Esenwein-Pasternack) and

There Is No Death (Johnstone-O'Hara). Sung with orchestral accompaniment by Mme. Ernestine Schumann-Heink on Victor Record No. 7584. List price, \$2.00.



R C A VICTOR COMPANY, Inc.
Camden, New Jersey

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Anton Heinrich Radziwill (1775-1833) was a player, a singer, a lover and a composer of music. His principal work was entitled *Compositions to Goethe's dramatic poem of Faust*, published in 1835. It consists of twenty-five numbers. The selection here, spoken by Prof. Ebert, with a chorus and orchestra under Dr. Weissmann providing a background, is effective. The recording in both selections is excellent.



GREGORIAN
V-V6199

- (1) LUX AETERNA. (2) IN PARADISUM. Chor der Benediktiner of the Monastery Church of the Arch Abbey at Beuron. One side and
GLOCKEN VOM TURM DER KLOSTERKIRCHE DER ERZABTEI BEURON. One side.
One 10-inch disc. \$75.

This disc, taken from the German division of the Victor International list, deserves wider attention than such a listing generally gives a record. The first side, setting forth two Gregorian chants, is well sung, and the magnificent recording is startlingly realistic. The chorus is apparently a small one, but the voices come through so naturally that they seem almost to be in the same room with the listener. On the reverse side are heard the chimes from the tower of the Monastery Church of the Arch Abbey at Beuron. This, too, is excellently recorded. Those who cannot afford the more expensive Gregorian chant recordings will find it worthwhile to investigate this little disc.

VOCAL



IRELAND
O'HARA
V-1583

- SEA FEVER. (John Masfield-John Ireland) One side and
DE CAPTAIN OF DE MARGUERITE. (W. B. Armsbary-Geoffrey O'Hara) One side. Conrad Thibault (Baritone) with piano accompaniment by Theodore Walstrum.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

ESENWEIN
O'HARA
V-7584

- TAPS. (J. Berg Esenwein—Adapted and harmonized by Josef Pasternack) One side and
THERE IS NO DEATH. (Gordon Johnstone - Geoffrey O'Hara) One side. Ernestine Schumann-Heink (Contralto) with orchestra. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

The first of these records introduces a new artist to the phonograph audience. A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where for five years he was a pupil of Emilio De Gogorza, Conrad Thibault is a young American baritone who has already become well known through his concert and radio work. He is also a member of the Philadelphia Grand Opera Company. For his first record he sings a song by John Ireland and another by Geoffrey O'Hara. The Ireland song, based on a poem by John Masfield, expresses the longing of a sailor



RELEASES FOR THE MONTH OF

OCTOBER

85015	<p>BEETHOVEN—SONATA in C SHARP MINOR (Moonlight Sonata) Op. 27, No. 2 First Movement (Adagio sostenuto) Parts I and II Piano Solo WILHELM KEMPF</p>	<p>Recorded in Europe PRICE \$1.25</p>
85016	<p>BEETHOVEN—SONATA in C SHARP MINOR (Moonlight Sonata) Op. 27, No. 2 (a) Second Movement (Allegretto) (b) Third Movement (Presto agitato) Part I Third Movement (Presto agitato) Part II Piano Solo WILHELM KEMPF</p>	<p>Recorded in Europe PRICE \$1.25</p>

Brunswick Records

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for the sea, while the other piece, sung in French-Canadian dialect, is a rollicking, humorous affair. Mr. Thibault has a fresh, clear, vigorous baritone, of excellent quality, and the clarity of his enunciation is admirable. Both songs are expressively interpreted, and the record arouses the hope that we shall soon have more discs by this artist. The piano accompaniments for both pieces are by another Curtis Institute graduate, Theodore Walstrum. The recording is very good. . . . Mme. Schumann-Heink, after a long absence from the Victor lists, appears in two pieces that will probably please the vast majority of her admirers. *Taps*, adapted and harmonized by Joseph Pasternack, is sung quietly and effectively. *There Is No Death* has little to recommend it. Mme. Schumann-Heink's voice holds up surprisingly well, but that does not mean that it has preserved all of its fine qualities. The recording is satisfactory.

- SCHUMANN** { **FRAUENLIEBE UND LEBEN:** (a) *Er, der Herrlichste von*
C-G4070M { *allen*; (b) *Seit ich ihn gesehen*. Two sides. Lotte Lehmann
(Soprano) with orchestra conducted by Frederick Weissmann.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

This is a repressing of one of the four discs in the Parlophone *Frauenliebe und Leben* set, reviewed in *Disques* on page 483 of the January, 1931, issue. It contains two of the eight songs that comprise the song-cycle. They are moving and expressive, and Lotte Lehmann's singing is wholly admirable. She has a lovely voice, well-suited to the music, and there are few sopranos one would prefer hearing to her. Dr. Weissmann conducts a small chamber orchestra for the accompaniments.

- GRIEG** { **EIN TRAUM.** One side and
B-85013 { **ICH LIEBE DICH.** One side. Karin Branzell (Contralto)
with piano accompaniment by Manfred Gurlitt.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

Among the minor song writers Grieg holds a high place, but very few of his songs have reached records. Here are two lovely examples whose chief appeal lies in their simplicity and frank sentimentality. Karin Branzell's rich contralto is heard to excellent advantage in each song, and the piano accompaniments by Manfred Gurlitt, who has frequently been heard on Polydor records as an orchestral conductor, are excellent. The recording is impeccably done.

- BEETHOVEN** { **WORSHIP OF GOD IN NATURE.** (Beethoven) One side
GIORDANI { and
B-90237 { **CARO MIO BEN.** (Giordani) One side. Heinrich Schlusnus
(Baritone) with orchestra and organ accompaniment.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

The first side of this disc, containing Beethoven's *Worship of God in Nature*, was reviewed from the Polydor pressing in the October, 1931, issue of *Disques*. It is well sung, and the Berlin State Opera Orchestra under Hermann Weigert provides an effective accompaniment. The Giordani *Caro mio ben* has an organ accompaniment played by Franz Rupp. Giordani was the name of an Italian musical family of the eighteenth century, of which Carmine Giordani, composer

—New Issues—

Columbia Masterworks*



BEETHOVEN: QUARTET IN C SHARP MINOR, Op. 131. This great quartet has long awaited an electrical recording such as is now offered, executed by the Léner String Quartet with their customary impeccable art and profound appreciation of the emotional content of the work, which is regarded as the culminating point of Beethoven's genius and in certain respects his supreme contribution to the world's music; many whose opinions command respect consider at least debatable the question of whether or not it is the greatest of all musical compositions. The boundless enthusiasm shown for it by such men as Richard Wagner is final

proof of its significance. This is unquestionably one of the outstanding musical events of the year.

MASTERWORKS SET No. 175

Beethoven: Quartet in C Sharp Minor, Op. 131. Lenér String Quartet. In Ten Parts, on Five Twelve-Inch Records. \$7.50 with Album.

BEETHOVEN: EGMONT: OVERTURE. The Egmont Overture is one of Beethoven's unquestioned masterpieces. It was inspired by the composer's great admiration for Goethe's tragedy of the same name—an admiration which prompted Beethoven to insist upon the unusual provision that he receive no payment for the composition. The overture is forceful and dramatic beyond measure—a true hero-song, tonally depicting a strong man's battle with a relentless fate. The vivid picture presented by the music is evoked by Mengelberg in a manner to be expected from his past recordings of orchestral masterpieces.

Beethoven: Egmont: Overture, Op. 84. Willem Mengelberg and Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam. In Two Parts, on One Twelve-Inch Record, No. 68058, \$2.00.

ISSUED IN SEPTEMBER

BACH: PARTITA No. 2, IN C MINOR. Columbia has added to its already astonishing list of pianoforte celebrities the name of Harold Samuel, world's foremost interpreter of Bach. He records first one of the charming partitas of Bach—a suite of six miniature pieces comprising an impressive Sinfonia or prelude, a serenely flowing Allemande, a lightly blithesome Courante; the Sarabande (an old Spanish dance form) is impassioned and stately, the Rondeau sparkling and erratic, and the Caprice “enchanting in its wayward humor.”

Bach: Partita No. 2, in C Minor, for Pianoforte. Harold Samuel. In Four Parts, on Two Twelve-Inch Records, 68056-D and 68057-D. \$1.50 Each.



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"Magic Notes"

of an opera *La Vittoria d'Amor*, Tommaso Giordani, also a composer, and Giuseppe Giordani (1744-1798), another composer and the probable author of *Caro mio ben*, were the most prominent members. Schlusnus' fine voice again is heard to excellent advantage, and the organ accompaniment is well played by Rupp. The recording, while bringing Schlusnus' voice out a little too strongly—a fault that can be corrected by adjusting the volume of the phonograph — reproduces the organ magnificently.



MENDELSSOHN

V-ES697

IMPORTED

ELIJAH: (a) *Es Ist Genug*. (b) *Ist nicht des Herrn wort wie feuer*. Two sides. Friedrich Schorr (Baritone) with New Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

When Coates and Schorr collaborate on a record the results are generally well worth listening to. Shifting from the composer whose works we have grown accustomed to hearing them interpret—Wagner—they now essay two selections from Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. The jump is rather a long one, but the two negotiate it successfully. Schorr's singing is little short of magnificent, and the orchestral accompaniment is well managed. The recording is very good; the kettledrums at the beginning of *Ist nicht des Herrn wort wie feuer* in particular come out well.

MISCELLANEOUS



V-B4033

to

V-B4038

IMPORTED

PICTORIAL TALKS FOR BEGINNERS IN GERMAN. By Anton Hermann Winter. Six 10-inch discs in album, with picture book and grammar. \$9.

This set aims to teach German with the use of pictures and phonograph records. The pictures, by Simon Bening, one of the Flemish miniaturists of the early sixteenth century, illustrate the twelve months of the year and are admirably reproduced. A grammar, to be used in conjunction with the records, accompanies the set.

V-36061

USEFUL PHRASES IN ENGLISH-FRENCH. Rex Palmer and E. M. Stephan. One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

V-36062

USEFUL PHRASES IN ENGLISH-ITALIAN. Cyril Nash and Renato Delle Piane. One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

These records continue the series started in June, when Victor released a record of Useful Phrases in English and German. Another dealing with phrases in English and Spanish followed in August, and now these two present phrases in English and French and English and Italian. Language records are apparently increasing in popularity, and this inexpensive series, though naturally greatly limited in scope, is an excellent idea. Printed leaflets, giving both the English and the French and Italian of the phrases spoken on the records, are included.

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Birmingham, England

(Annual Subscription, 1 dollar 80 cents)

From 'THE GRAMOPHONE,' March
1932, by Christopher Stone.

'Any of our readers who are not
regular readers of the *British Musician*
should lose no time in sampling a
copy: the analytical notes on famous
recorded works are most valuable.'

From the 'BENDIGO ADVERTISER,'
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'For several years I have derived
great help from the *British Musician*
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CORRESPONDENCE



To the Local Dealer

Editor, *Disques*:

I have been very much interested in *Disques* from its beginning, and especially in your editorials concerning business conditions and future possibilities of the phonograph. In this connection there are, in my opinion, two serious drawbacks which are at present retarding the progress of the industry.

In the first place, it is almost impossible to obtain a record of the better class from a local dealer. It used to be that when a new list of records was announced one could go to the local dealer, hear his favorite numbers, and purchase only such material as interested him. Today, however, it is necessary, in nine cases out of ten, for the dealer to order specially such items as the customer wishes to hear. This automatically places the latter under obligation to purchase everything that is ordered, whether he likes it or not, or the items not purchased are just so much "dead stock" on the dealer's hands. The customer, on finding that nothing he wants is available, and not wishing to obligate himself, just says "Never mind!", his interest is killed and just so much business is lost.

In the second place, with almost every local dealer there is a woeful lack of intelligent salesmanship and coöperation with the customer. When a customer asks for one of the finer records, the chances are he is acquainted to some degree with either the material or the performer, and he dislikes very much to almost have to pick out the record himself because the clerk knows nothing about that "highbrow stuff." . . .

Records, and especially the finer ones, have always been handled, more or less, as so much black material rather than as a highly specialized article, appealing only to a particularly educated clientèle, and demanding trained salesmanship and intelligent exploitation. Today, as never before, more intelligent coöperation with the customer is required of the local dealer, as the radio occupies such a prominent place in his everyday entertainment that he is inclined to select the few finer broadcasts rather than submit

to the inconvenience and difficulty of obtaining phonograph records. . . .

DONALD F. ROHRER

Wilkinsburg, Pa.

Mr. Gerstlé on Unrecorded Music

Editor, *Disques*:

Every lover of the music of Brahms will agree with the letter of Harrison Smith, who asks for more recordings of the chamber music. It is well known that Brahms was intensely self-critical; having, for instance, destroyed about twenty quartets before publishing his first. Thus, all of the chamber and orchestral music are significant works. Of the latter, only the two Serenades, the First Piano Concerto and the *Tragic* Overture remain unrecorded; but less than half of the twenty-four chamber works are available on records at present, and the remainder should be recorded during the coming year, as a contribution to the forthcoming Brahms Centennial celebration. Some of the choral works, including the completion of the *German* Requiem, might be attempted. But—no duplications of existent recorded works, please!

Your September editorial is intensely interesting, although I cannot agree that much of the whole field of music has been put on records—not while so much of Bach, Schumann and Brahms remains unrecorded.

Thanks to the Sibelius Society, we shall have, no doubt, all his significant works on discs, but where are the half-dozen or so masterworks apiece of d'Indy, Bax and Loefler? The French have recorded a vast amount of the effusions of their living composers, but where are the English? The one nation who, at the present time, would be justified in being chauvinistic musically has, except in regard to Elgar and Delius, shamefully neglected its composers on records. Even Delius has not been given his just deserts.

Then there are Bartók, Scriabin, Medtner, Bloch, Malipiero . . . but why go on? Think it over . . . There is plenty of worth while music left to record—enough for a lifetime!

HENRY S. GERSTLÉ

New York, N. Y.

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NEW MUSIC

ANGELUS AD PASTORES: *Four - part Motet for Mixed Chorus (a Cappella)*. By Hans Leo Hassler. Boston: *E. C. Schirmer Co.* 18c.

The E. C. Schirmer Music Company of Boston, which specializes in the publication of choral music, is doing inestimable service to the cause of choral singing by its publication of carefully revised editions of old classical masterpieces and the works of the modern school. Hans Leo Hassler (1564-1612) was one of the leading composers of secular and congregational music of the sixteenth century, and according to the editor, Walter Williams, "he published many collections of chorals, and played a very important part in the development and evolution of the congregational choral. In his more elaborate compositions, he unites in an unusual degree the variety and warmth of harmony and expressiveness of the northern Italians with the continued traditions of the Flemish composers who brought the art of contrapuntal polyphony to the point of perfection." The words of *Angeles ad pastores* are taken from the Breviary Office of Lauds of Christmas Day, and the composition as a whole is a good example of the composer's style.

SONATE NO. 3 for Piano, Op. 25. By E. W. Korngold. New York: *Associated Music Publishers, Inc.* (Edition Schott). \$2.50.

In spite of its banal melodies the Sonata is so well constructed architecturally that it is a distinct pleasure to play it through from beginning to end. Korngold's music is never morbid, but overflows with vitality and high spirits and is the healthiest kind of music there is. The four movements are: (1) *Allegro molto*; (2) *Andante religioso*; (3) *Tempo di Menuetto*; (4) *Rondo: Allegro giocoso*.

SONATA for Viola, Op. 41. By Joh. Engelmann. New York: *Associated Music Publishers, Inc.* (Ed. Breitkopf & Härtel). \$1.50.

Written in memory of the composer's relatives who died in 1930, and sub-titled "Trauer-Sonate," this Sonata is a deeply-felt work, full of emotion and religious sentiment. It is one of the few works where the absence of the ubiquitous piano is not felt, as all the

resources of the viola are used for the expression of those sentiments and seem to be self-sufficient. The second movement (*Funeral March*), with the chorale "Ach, wie füchtig" at the end, is especially effective.

ELEGISCHER GESANG: *Elegy for Four-part Chorus of Mixed Voices with accompaniment of String Ensemble*, Op. 118. By Ludwig van Beethoven. Boston: *E. C. Schirmer Co.* 20c.

This little masterpiece of Beethoven deserves to be more widely known than it is, and the present edition by H. Clough-Leigher ought to contribute to its popularity. Beethoven was not very adept in his treatment of the human voice, but the *Elegy* has none of the defects of the larger scores in this respect. The sentiment throughout is more introspective than tragic. The accompanying string ensemble consists of first violin, second violin, viola and violoncello.

SKETCHES for Piano, Op. 60. By A. Willner. New York: *Associated Music Publishers, Inc.* (Universal Edition). \$1.25.

All the nine sketches are miniature tone-poems entitled: *Reed Pipe*, *Wild Joy*, etc., and only take two minutes each to perform. They are quite effective if played with correct tempi and strict observance of the marks of expression.

PARTITA for Violin and Piano, Op. 14. By Paul Kadosa. New York: *Associated Music Publishers, Inc.* (Schott Edition). \$1.50.

The Hungarian idiom and sentiment predominate throughout the four movements of the Suite, especially the second, *In modo rustico*, which is a wild peasant dance full of intricate rhythms and percussive effects for the piano. A short *Quasi una cadenza* follows, first by the piano, then violin, which leads straight to the final *Capriccio*. A more effective handling of the two instruments would be hard to imagine, as Kadosa makes full use of all their distinctive characteristics and peculiarities.

MAURICE B. KATZ

BOOKS

GEORGE GERSHWIN'S SONG BOOK. Illustrations by Alajalov. New York: *Simon & Schuster*. \$5.

This luxuriously gotten up volume will be welcomed by Gershwin's admirers, and especially by those of them who can play the piano. Eighteen of his most popular songs are included in the collection, and each is given in two arrangements: first, in the regular sheet-music form for less gifted pianists, and second in a more difficult transcription for piano solo. These latter, Mr. Gershwin says in his introduction, were included "for those good pianists, of whom there is a growing number, who enjoy popular music but who rebel at the too-simple arrangements issued by the publishers with the average pianist in view." The admirable illustrations, in color, by Alajalov are satirical and amusing and add considerably to the charm of the book. At the end is a list of Gershwin's published works and another of available phonograph and piano recordings of his compositions. The publishers have certainly done their utmost to make the binding and typography of the volume as interesting as its contents.

THE BRITISH MUSICIAN AND MUSICAL NEWS: 1926-1931 (72 issues). Edited by Sydney Grew. Birmingham, England: *The British Musician*. \$5 the complete file.

Most American music critics still ignore the phonograph, and the majority of newspapers and magazines, willing to devote columns of space to the movies and books, still deny space to reviews of the new records. The consequence of this is that finding good record criticism in America is rather difficult, and that probably accounts in large measure for the relative obscurity of the machine over here. Many American collectors, seeking good record reviews, find it profitable to consult the English and European musical journals, most of which devote generous space to the output of the phonograph companies. Mention should be made here of *The British Musician*, a small but extremely lively and informative magazine edited by Sydney Grew. Mr. Grew's journal has been in existence since January, 1926, and considerable space

has been devoted in each issue to phonograph records. The complete file of the magazine thus covers practically every disc of any importance that has been issued in England during the past six years, which is to say, since electrical recording first appeared. What is more important is the consistently fine quality of the reviews. Written apparently by the editor himself, they maintain a high standard of excellence and reflect the balanced opinions of a musician of wide knowledge and unquestionable taste. Mr. Grew's well written articles and reviews are the main features of the magazine, but there are also a great many other articles by other writers, and some of them, though several years old, still make instructive and enjoyable reading. Inasmuch as the most important record releases in England have also been issued in America, Mr. Grew's magazine will be as useful to the American as it is to the English reader. The back numbers of most magazines generally reveal unmistakable indications of age, but *The British Musician's* back numbers are as alive and fresh as the current issue.

A REPERTORY OF ONE HUNDRED SYMPHONIC PROGRAMMES for Public Auditions of the Orthophonic Phonograph-Gramophone. By Edward Prime-Stevenson. Florence, Italy: *The Giuntina Press*. (Privately printed.)

Mr. Prime-Stevenson here reprints the programs of phonograph records that he presented for private audiences in Florence during the past two years. There are 107 of them. The first part of the book is devoted to a discussion by the author of program-making and conducting. His programs were not built, he says, "with the idea of pleasing other auditors, at total expense of my own pleasure," since "to please all tastes being impossible, one may do best to try to please his own." The programs are admirably selected. Scattered throughout the volume are quotations from the same author's "Long-Haired Iopas" and various of his poems. Since the literature relating to the phonograph is as yet pitifully small, it is too bad that this unique book is not generally available.

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